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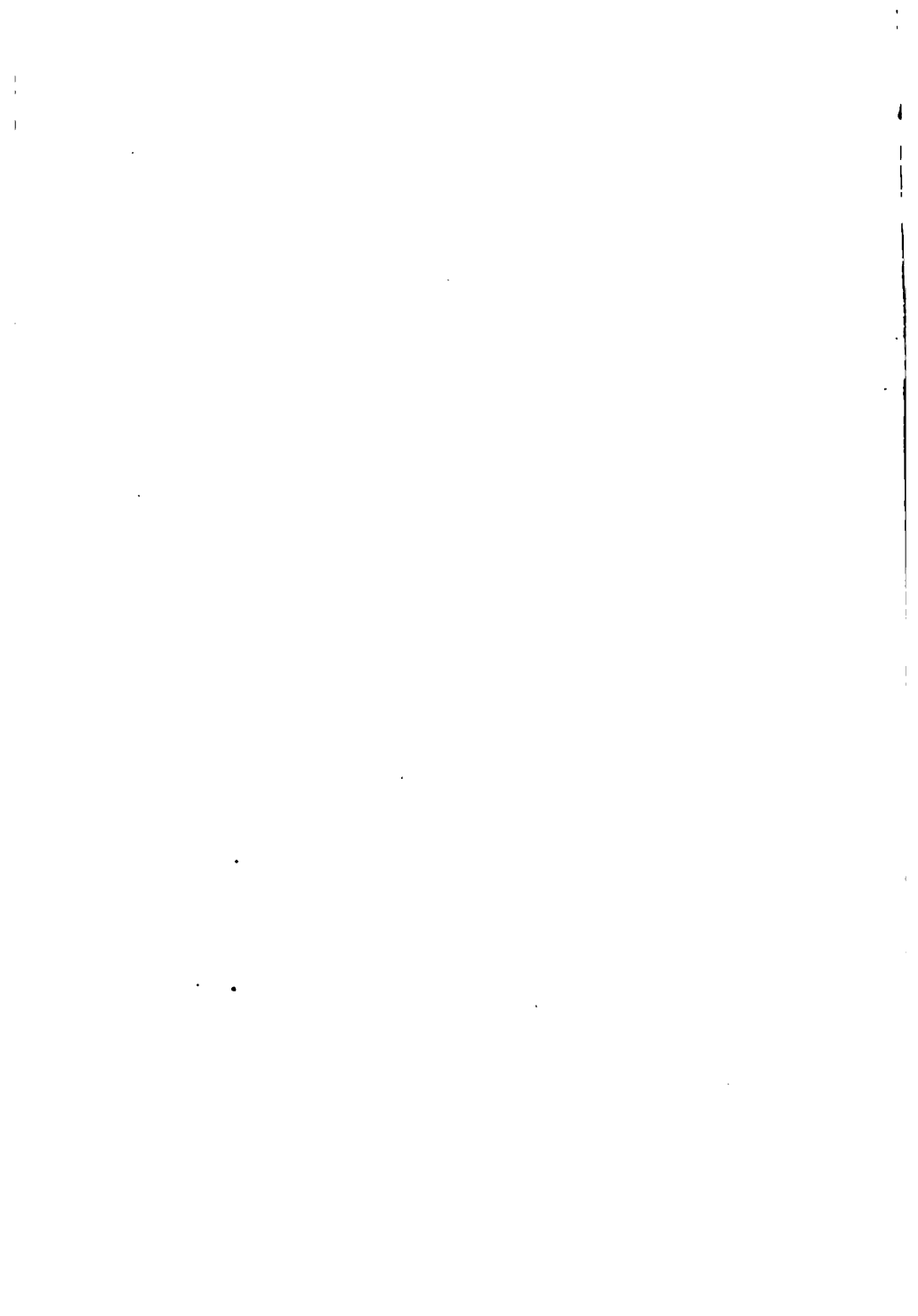
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A SON OF THE SEA









THE FIGHT WITH THE WHALE.

A SON OF THE SEA

BY

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London

JAMES NISBET & CO., LIMITED

22 BERNERS STREET, W.

1908

Univ. Library, Univ. Calif., Santa Cruz

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press, Edinburgh

PR
6003
U23
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A SON OF THE SEA

"JEM BAKER, please, sir." He said it as if he was afraid he was going to be beaten for telling his name, although he had been asked what it was. He stood in front of the big man who had asked him, all ready to make a rush off if the man only lifted his hand, just as you have seen a town sparrow fly if a boy only stooped—it was not going to wait until that boy had picked up a stone. He was a queer-looking little fellow, who might have been any age between ten and fourteen for all one could tell—it all depended upon whether he was very hungry or only feeling just a little so, for as far as he could remember he had never known what it was to have his belly quite full.

But perhaps before I go any further I ought to give you as much of his history as he himself could recollect up to the time of which I am telling you, only asking you to remember that it was from himself I heard it, and that his account was not very clear. As far as he knew he had never had a father or a mother; his earliest recollections were of an old woman who lived in a court in the



north end of Liverpool, and who used to go out every day, leaving him in the court and locking the door of the one room in which they lived, so that he couldn't get in again until she came home. So all day long, in the cold or heat, wet or dry, he played with the other children like any young wild animal, but not finding anything to eat nearly as easy as the wild creatures do, although he could, and did, eat many funny things that most of us would not think could be eaten at all. When Granny, as he called her, came back he was always waiting close to the door of the wretched house looking out eagerly for her, because he knew that she would bring him something to eat, and take him up into their room and make a fire. She was never unkind to him, never came back reeling and tottering and using horrible words as he saw the other women doing so often. And although she never made a fuss of him or talked to him much, he looked upon her as the best person in the world; while a few poor odds and ends in the little room, kept very clean and in neat order, seemed to him like the furniture of a palace. For young as he was, he felt rather than knew that his lot was far better and happier than that of most of his play-fellows, and knew too that it was through no fault of Granny's that he spent so many hours in the streets. One thing more, although the talk of everybody around him all day was full of evil, he never heard Granny talk like it—indeed she talked very little

at any time—and so, although he knew the meaning of bad language, the using of it never got to be a habit with him.

Then there came a time when Granny, whose steps had been getting slower and more uncertain for some time, did not get up one morning and go to wherever it was she worked as usual. And when Jemmy came fearfully to her from his little mattress on the floor in the corner of the room and asked her what was the matter she said nothing, but drew his face down to hers and gave him a kiss, a thing which she hardly ever did. He was quite frightened, for he saw tears running down her face. But he kept quiet, for there was something about her that made him so. And presently he felt her hand grow very cold. He whispered "Granny, Granny," but there was no answer. He waited a little while and called again, louder this time, for fear was taking firm hold of him. And then suddenly he saw an awful change in her face, and screamed aloud. People came and filled the room, talking and bustling about. They asked him many questions, but his answers did not seem to satisfy them. In some way he found himself out in the street, and understood that where he was now was all the home he had.

I think that he must have forgotten something here, because it does not seem likely that he would have been quite ignorant of the way in which the body of his Granny was taken away, and what

became of her few bits of furniture. Yet I can only go by what he said, which was that from the time he was hustled out of the room until he found himself entirely his own master all was like a very jumbled-up dream. Now in those days little un-owned children didn't matter to anybody except when, as often happened, they got in the way or were caught stealing. And so Jemmy slipped quite easily into the position of a street Arab, and had to use all the strange bits of experience that he had gained in the streets through the long days while his Granny was away at work. He had long ago learned to look upon a policeman as the one bogey to be afraid of, and knew all the many ways to dodge the terrible big men in blue who snapped up little boys and took them away to some dreadful unknown place called prison. He knew too all the hiding-places about the docks where one could creep in and sleep at night, and all the likeliest spots where to look for something to eat. And so he lived much as the sparrows do, but not quite so easily, since his wants were much greater than theirs; and although he had many narrow escapes, by some strange good fortune, as he thought it, he was never caught by one of his many enemies, the policemen.

This, though a very scanty account of his career, is all I know of it until the time when my story opens. He had been prowling around the Salt-house Dock in his usual search for something to

eat, dodging on board the ships and peering into their galleys, when he suddenly caught sight of a big crust lying on the coal-locker in the galley of a barque, and grabbing it was making off. But he ran into the arms of a big man dressed in blue cloth with a cheese-cutter cap on, who held him and said, "Hello, young man, where are you going in such a hurry, and what's your name?"

Jemmy answered the easiest question first, and stood as I have said, only anxious to get away. For although he had grown into the habit of considering himself "lucky" because he had met a lot of kind people during his Arab life, he had also learned to be very cautious—just like a wild animal, whose only prospect of escaping death is to keep a way of escape open, to watch with keenest intelligence every move made by a possible enemy, and at the same time to keep every weapon that Nature has provided it with ready for use at any moment.

But if Jemmy had only known it, he was in the presence of a man whose heart was just running over with kindness. Rough and burly as he looked outside, he was full of goodness and anxiety to make other people happy. Perhaps it was because he had himself been a poor homeless boy in the streets of London, and although now, by his own unhelped efforts, he had become mate of a big vessel, he had not lost any of his love for the poor boys who were now what he had been. And so

his next question put Jemmy entirely at his ease. He said in a funny, choking kind of a voice, "I s'pose you are pretty hungry, ain't you?" Jemmy was going to tell a lie and say that he hadn't tasted anything for a couple of days, but another quick look at the big sailor's face prevented him, and he answered, "I did have somefin' t'eat yus'day, sir, but I'm orful hungry now." "Poor little man," said the sailor, "I should think you was, what with this bitter wind (it was in November) and them rags. Never mind, come along with me and have some breakfast." With that he turned and went towards the gangway leading on to the wharf, Jemmy following at his heels like a dog. But as soon as they got ashore Mr. Burney slackened his pace for Jemmy to come up with him, and began talking to the boy in boy fashion, saying many things which Jemmy understood, because they belonged to his everyday experience. And so the time passed rapidly until they stood at the door of Mr. Burney's boarding-house, where for the first time since their meeting Mr. Burney laid his hand upon Jemmy's shoulder, in case at the last moment he should get alarmed and run away. But I don't think he need have been afraid. My experience is that boys, though very shy, I won't say timid, always know who they can trust and talk to, and when they do give their confidence to anybody, they give it altogether.

So this queer pair went to Mr. Burney's snug

little sitting-room, where there was a bright fire burning and a neat breakfast-table laid with the shining things on it winking at the blaze. Bidding Jemmy sit down near the fire Mr. Burney rang the bell, which was answered almost before the ringing had ceased by a pretty, bright-faced servant. And as she opened the door there came in with her a perfectly maddening smell of frying bacon and coffee, which made Jemmy feel quite faint and sick with longing. "Breakfast, Jenny, please," said Mr. Burney, "and bring another plate and knife and fork for my young friend here." "All right, sir," replied Jenny, shooting a glance at Jemmy and whisking out of the room. She was no sooner gone than Mr. Burney said, "Jemmy, this mucky morning has made my hands dirty, an' I'm going to wash 'em. Won't you come and have a rinse too?" And Jemmy, giving a look at his grimy little paws, said, "Thankee, sir," and followed his host into the next room, where there were all things ready for a wash. It was the first wash Jemmy had been able to indulge in for months, a real wash with soap and towel that is, and as he had early learned how good and pleasant a thing it is to keep clean, it had been the hardest to bear in his Arab life, that washing was so hard to get at. Even a swim in the muddy river was a stolen and dangerous pleasure, and then, you know, he couldn't get the dirt off. So now he forgot his hunger even in the eagerness to get

clean, and Mr. Burney, watching him out of the corner of one eye, was delighted. At last the puffing and splashing and scrubbing with the rough towel was over, and it was a bright and ruddy-faced Jemmy that followed his entertainer in to breakfast.

I should like to describe that meal if I could, how Jemmy's awkward efforts to handle the unusual knife and fork were helped by the cheery, good-humoured remarks of Mr. Burney, until, feeling quite at his ease, Jemmy demolished the savoury bacon and fried eggs and crisp new rolls and drank the fragrant coffee as if his small stomach had no limit to its storage capacity. Mr. Burney encouraged him, until, with a long-drawn sigh of contentment, he said, "I've had enough, thankee sir. I think I've ate more than I ever done in my life before at one time." "All right, Jemmy," responded his host; "now then, pull up your chair to the fire an' let's have a yarn."

For the next hour Jemmy, lured on by the artful questioning of the sailor, told his simple story, never noticing how hard it was for the listener to keep back the tears. And when he had finished Mr. Burney said, "That's all right then, Jemmy, so far. Now would you like to go to sea along with me?" "Ah, wouldn't I just," answered Jemmy; "why, I've tried to hide away ever so many times in ships what was goin' away, but they always hiked me out, an' sometimes I had a jolly good lickin' too. But if you'd only take me, sir, I'd do all I could—

I would really, sir." And the eagerness in the boy's face was pitiful to see. He was evidently quite out of conceit with the life of the streets. "Very well, my boy," said Mr. Burney, "I'll take you; but I want you to promise me that you won't tell lies, you won't steal, and you will be clean. Anything you don't know, ask me and I'll tell you. And if you'll only trust me, I'll do all I can to make a man of you." "I promise yer, sir; I really will do all you want me as far as I can, if you'll only take me away." "All right, that's a bargain, my boy, an' now come along and get rigged up in something ship-shape. I can't see you in those horrible rags any longer." Jemmy made no reply, but jumped up ready to follow.

Now while the process of fitting Jemmy out was going on, let me just explain why Mr. Burney was doing this. There are some people whose hearts are naturally full of love and generosity. It does not matter if in their young and almost helpless days they had to fight their way alone, suffering such hardships as prove how tough a boy or girl can be; when they grow up, if ever they are able, they feel so deeply for those that are, as they were, fighting for dear life, that they are full of eagerness to do whatever they can to help those helpless ones. I have already said that Mr. Burney had been a homeless boy in much the same case as Jemmy, and so it will be easy to understand how glad he was of this opportunity to give vent to

his desires to do something for somebody. Jemmy was fortunate of course for having been in the way just at the right time. But I suppose it had all been arranged for by that wonderful Power which controls all our actions. Moreover, Mr. Burney was a homeless, friendless man. So far he had never been able to stay ashore long enough to make friends; and as for a home, although he longed for one with all his big warm heart, he seemed no nearer to finding some one spot that he could look forward to returning to from his long wanderings about the world. Also, he very much wanted some one to love and work for, being entirely unselfish; but here again, although he had often tried to find such a person, he had been grievously deceived and disappointed. Yet these sad experiences of his had not made him sour and bitter, he still hoped, and when Jemmy fell in his way, he let his heart go out to the small fellow as freely as if he had never been deceived before. So while the man in the shop to which Mr. Burney had taken the boy was busy producing the clothes which he was being asked for, his customer's mind was also busy with plans for Jemmy's future. Jemmy of course could think of nothing but the delightful present time. Every fresh piece of clothing looked so good and comfortable, and the shopkeeper was so polite, that the whole thing was more like some beautiful dream, from which Jemmy was half afraid he would presently wake up and find himself shiver-

ing and hungry in an out-of-the-way corner of some gloomy alley between the big warehouses.

At last Mr. Burney appeared satisfied with his purchases, and ordering the shopkeeper to make one parcel of the things necessary to dress Jemmy completely from cap to boots, he paid the bill out of what seemed to Jemmy's wide-open eyes a big purse full of sovereigns, and told the man to send the rest of the clothes to his lodgings. Then he said, "Now, Jemmy, we'll get along to the baths and you shall say good-bye to those nasty old rags of yours for ever, I hope. Come along, young man; in half-an-hour you'll hardly know yourself." So they departed, and the shopkeeper stood looking after them with a curious smile upon his face as if he could hardly understand the business, but was very well satisfied with his share of it at any rate.

Half-an-hour afterwards it would have puzzled any one to have recognised in the trim, smart little lad who marched so proudly along by Mr. Burney's side the miserable waif of so short a time before. And Mr. Burney's glances down at his newly-found friend were full of satisfaction as they threaded their way down to where the ship of which Mr. Burney was mate was lying in the Wapping Dock awaiting her cargo. The mate purposely led Jemmy along the quayside in the direction that brought them in view of the ship head on, and as she appeared towering up from the dirty

water of the dock, her beautiful white figure-head, with its outstretched arm pointing out to sea, the mate with pardonable pride in her appearance said, "There's the *Rosamund*, Jemmy; what do you think of her?" Now Jemmy having so long prowled about the docks was very familiar of course with the appearance of all kinds of ships, from the dirty little schooner no bigger than a barge to the mighty steamships as long as a street and as high as a big house. But his mind had always been busy with other things than admiration of ships, and besides, he had always been obliged to keep a bright look-out for policemen on the alert for small thieves of his type. So that really he came to the consideration of the *Rosamund* quite as fresh as if he had never seen a ship before. And being a very smart little boy also, he was well aware that anything he might say in praise of the vessel would please his new-found friend.

So, after pausing for a moment to look critically at the vessel, he turned to the mate and said, "I think she's just beautiful, sir, an' what a lovely lady that is for a figure-head." "I am glad she meets your approval, Jemmy," replied Mr. Burney, "for you'll make her your home for a long time I hope, and you may get to be as proud as I am of her. And I can tell you that she's as good as she's beautiful—some of these handsome clippers are anything but that. They look pretty enough moored to a dock wall or at anchor in a quiet

harbour, but in a gale of wind forereaching or hove-to, they're as ugly in their behaviour as they are pretty in their lines. But never mind that now; we'll get aboard and have a look around." Obediently following his guide, Jemmy climbed the gangway, and smart as Mr. Burney's movements were, he was alongside of that gentleman almost as soon as his feet touched the deck.

All was quiet on board, for she had not yet begun to receive her outward cargo, and consequently her decks were almost as trim and tidy as if she were at sea, in striking contrast to the usual condition of ships in dock. An old, old man, bent and withered and burnt almost black by tropical suns, came hobbling to meet them. He saluted the mate, who said, "Good-morning, watchman; nothing to report, I suppose?" "Nothing, sir," answered the ancient mariner; "only a few letters for the captain, and some papers which I've laid on the cabin table."

"Very good," said Mr. Burney. "Come, Jemmy, we'll go below."

CHAPTER II

I FANCY I can hear a young reader saying rather angrily, "Where are the adventures? I want Jemmy to have some adventures." All right, my little friend, I'll endeavour to satisfy you, but you'll have to be patient. I can answer for Jemmy himself that the whole time since his meeting Mr. Burney seemed like one series of adventures, and only for the fact that his mode of life had made him almost as reserved as a Red Indian, he would long ago have had to kick and scream with delight. And now when he found himself in the cabin of a ship, in a place which to his eyes seemed like a palace, he had harder work still to keep from rushing off and exploring every nook and corner of the mysterious saloon. This I think must have been felt by the mate, who after glancing at the papers on the table said, "I find I've got some writing to do, Jemmy, so you can amuse yourself by having a look round the ship. I don't believe you'll get into mischief."

Muttering "Thank you, sir," Jemmy snatched his cap and darted off. But his survey of the cabin did not last long. Nearly every door that he tried to open was locked, and as he did not like to disturb the mate by asking questions, he

crept softly on deck. Here he found matter enough, he felt, to interest him for a week, for although he had so often been on board ship before, he had never had the time and opportunity, or indeed the inclination, to take much notice of her. You see, he had always been looking for food, and also looking out for some enemy who would chase him off the ship and very likely give him a good cuff into the bargain. Now he was a privileged, leisured individual, who already felt a sense of ownership of the vessel, felt at any rate that everything about her was of consequence to him as his future home. He soon found the old watchman, who instead of being grumpy and reserved as some men are with boys, opened out to the bright lad and talked to him in a way that boys always appreciate, that is, on equal terms, or as if the boy were his own age. To Jemmy's incessant questioning the old man returned full replies, too full in fact for Jemmy to understand, especially as the old sailor's language was entirely nautical. Still, Jemmy was glad he didn't stop to explain, but went straight on as if he knew the boy understood every word. The strange pair were so pleased with each other that although it was nearly two hours before Mr. Burney came up and called his young friend, the time seemed only a few minutes long, and Jemmy felt almost grieved at having to part from the old watchman so soon.

But then, under the guidance of the mate, Jemmy

was taken all over the ship, and the general outline of his duties was explained to him, the principal thing, however, which was made clear to him being that he should always do everything he was told with eagerness and earnestness, as if he knew that upon his doing it well and quickly depended the safety of the ship. Never to skulk however unpleasant the work, or to funk however dangerous the duty seemed to be. To give no impudence to anybody, to be perfectly honest and truthful, and to be just as afraid of doing wrong as the natural boy is of doing right. All of which sounds like goody-goody preaching, but is not, for by such straightforward ways alone do boys become fine, strong, brave men.

Jemmy listened respectfully enough, feeling sure that all these directions were simple and easy to be followed, feeling too that the life he was about to enter upon would be one so exactly suited to him, that it would be a daily pleasure to keep out of mischief and to do what he was told. We have all felt like that sometimes, and we have usually learnt that the right way was never the easy one to follow.

However, not to weary my young friends, I pass quickly on to the time when, after what seemed the most wonderful experience possible of moving about doing all sorts of strange tasks and watching meanwhile the loading of the ship, the embarking of the stores and the rigging work overhead

to fit the *Rosamund* for sea, the day arrived when the ship's company were mustered at the shipping office to sign the articles for a voyage not to exceed three years to any part of the globe they might be called upon to visit. Captain Vincent, a stout, quiet man, had taken but little notice of Jemmy, having been quite satisfied with Mr. Burney's recommendation of him. And who prouder than that youngster could you find when he was called to sign the articles and informed that his wages would be twenty shillings per month. He gazed curiously around upon the rough-looking men who composed the crew, and wondered what their company would be like; but there, his whole life these days was full of wonder, and he stood waiting for orders what to do next, until the mate came to him and asked him whether he would like the rest of the day to go and say good-bye to any acquaintances or friends that he might have in Liverpool. Without a sigh or a pang of loneliness he answered truthfully that he had no one at all to think of, that as far as he knew the only friend he had in the world was Mr. Burney, and that he was ready to go where he was bidden, and do just what he was told.

I know that he will appear to most people as being unnaturally good and obedient, too docile, in fact, to have much sympathy with, but it must be remembered that he had felt the full bitterness of being master of himself at so early an age, and

the novelty of being under some one's direction and guidance had not yet had time to wear off. Besides, he had been both kindly and wisely treated. If any cruelty or capriciousness had been shown him, I have no doubt that he would have taken an early opportunity of returning to freedom and rags. But he had no desire to do so, and that was entirely due to the plain and sensible kindness of the man who had rescued him from the life of misery he had been leading,

So with a smile Mr. Burney dismissed him to the ship, and told him to make himself comfortable on board. He immediately ran off and soon reached the ship, where he sought out the old watchman, and busied himself under that worthy's direction in cleaning up the decks. While so doing he had his first adventure. A well-dressed young man, evidently tipsy, was coming up the gangway, and when just about to step on board he missed his footing and fell between the ship's side and the dock wall into the water with a tremendous splash. For one brief moment Jemmy stood breathless, motionless. Then with a spring like a cat he reached the side, and grabbing a coil of rope, hurled it overboard. It fell where the unlucky visitor was clutching frantically at the smooth side of the ship, fell in coils all over him, and in an instant he had got a grip of safety, for the upper end of the rope was well secured. Help was near at hand, a bowline was quickly made and lowered, and the young man,

quite sobered by his fall and wetting, put the noose over his head, and was soon hauled on board. Much advice was given him as to what he should do by the men who had gathered from the surrounding warehouses, but he with hardly a word hastened away. Jemmy stood panting with excitement, and conscious that he had done a good thing, which was its own reward, for nobody else had noticed it.

Thenceforward until the ship was ready to sail for Honolulu Jemmy's hours flew pleasantly by. He found plenty to do, and got into no scrapes. On the second day after signing the articles the *Rosamund* was to leave, and the crew had dribbled on board, most of them the worse for drink. With a sense of utter strangeness upon him Jemmy heard the orders flying, did his best to obey, and silently wondered at the change in his friend and protector, the mate. That gentleman seemed altered entirely into a stern taskmaster who was steadfastly angry with the men, and no wonder, for much work was to be done in getting the ship away. All seemed dreadfully complicated to Jemmy, and the more so that none of the men seemed to know what they were doing unless the mate and the second mate were behind them to direct them. But presently out of all the disorder and noise Jemmy saw that a definite purpose was being carried out; the big vessel's bow pointed out into the river, a large double-funnelled tug-boat, which was attached to her by a great rope, steamed ahead, and feeling

the strain the *Rosamund* obeyed, leaving the grim warehouses fading away behind her. She was fairly outward bound.

There was no stoppage of work though, for although Jemmy could not know it, in a very short time the vessel would be out in the stormy Irish Sea, the friendly tug would be leaving her, and she would have to fight her own way. And all that fight had to be made ready for, the jibboom rigged out, and the decks cleared up, so that the ropes by means of which all the sails are worked were made ready for running. However, I am not going to weary you with the description of all that work, which appeared to Jemmy like one long, confused scramble, the very language used being quite strange to him. Now and then he got a glimpse over the side of other vessels apparently flying by—small grimy schooners, giant ocean steamers, tall, gracefully-masted sailing ships—and everything combined to give him a splendid feeling that now indeed he was fairly launched upon an adventurous career.

Gradually as the ship slid past the various light-ships and buoys, and exchanged the turbid waters of the busy river for the clear green of the sea, the disorder aloft and about the decks began to melt into order, and even to Jemmy's eyes things looked more ship-shape. But there was another change too which threatened at first to spoil his enjoyment—the wind grew stronger, the waves began to rise, and the vessel to pitch most alarmingly, for she

was being dragged by one of the most powerful of the Liverpool tugs right in the teeth of the rising gale and sea. Fortunately for the boy's comfort he was one of those favoured persons who are never sea-sick, so that misery was mercifully spared him. It is only very cruel or very foolish persons who make a mock of sea-sickness, for it is an affliction that no one need be ashamed of. Yet I have seen in the bad old days poor lads made to work, beaten and brutally taunted as well, as if their being sea-sick was the sign of their being unfit for a rough life of adventure, as if, in short, they were poor mollycoddles. Never forget that the great Admiral Nelson suffered from sea-sickness every voyage, and yet achieved his great position in spite of so miserable an ailment.

But Jemmy began to feel cold and hungry and weary, for he really had been hard at work all day. So he knew had others, and therefore felt he had no right to expect relief until a rest-time for somebody should come, for of course he did not then know that until the vessel's arrival in her next port one-half of the crew would always be on duty. The ship at sea must be continually looked after, so while one watch sleeps, the other watch works. And this division of the crew into two watches now took place, rousing Jemmy's flagging interest afresh. Everybody was called aft, and the mate began by picking a man, the second mate picked another, and so on until only Jemmy was left, and the

mate beckoned to him to join the port or mate's watch.

Then another hand was sent to the wheel, and both watches went into the forecabin, or below as it is called, for a meal and a smoke, while Jemmy was called by the mate and introduced to the man who did the double work of cook and steward, as being at his service for such extra duties in the cabin as would justify his living there. For, as Mr. Burney said, "I don't want to make a steward or cook of you, but it won't hurt you to know how everything is done on board ship; it's the all-round man that is worth most, both to himself and other people." So Jemmy was sent below into the cabin by the steward, who showed him how to lay the cloth and to wait at table, promising to be very good to him if he would only show himself willing and do whatever he was told.

Jemmy felt that this was a fine change from the deck, where the keen wind and driving spray were searching him apparently for any little warmth he might have left. And since he had no romantic ideas of a sea-life, only thought of it as a means whereby food and clothes could be obtained, he felt rather surprised that the mate, who had hitherto been so kind to him, should deliberately tell him that he did not want him to take up what was evidently the most comfortable side of the profession of seafarer. And forgetting his hunger and weariness he went to work on his duties with great

goodwill, so that when the steward left him to clean knives and polish glasses he felt quite important, and refrained from helping himself to such trifles as a spoonful of condensed milk, a fragment of cabin biscuit, or a crumb of cheese, tempting to his craving appetite as these morsels were.

But Jemmy was to learn that sea-life was full of surprises, especially in a sailing ship, and that only the sailor who is ready for anything from mutiny to shipwreck can be considered to have learned his profession rightly. He had only just got nicely warm again, and begun to object to the stuffiness of the cuddy as being too highly flavoured with bilge water for his as yet unseasoned taste, when he heard loud shoutings above his head, felt a curious change in the motion of the ship, and unable to restrain his curiosity, ran up the companion way to see for himself what was happening. At first he thought he must be mistaken, for he saw no one except the helmsman and the skipper standing by him with a speaking-trumpet, then scuttling forward, he found that all the rest of the crew were busy hoisting sail, while the ship was lying helplessly tumbling about in the trough of an ugly, confused sea. And then to his great astonishment he saw in the twilight the mysterious shape of a huge steamer, as he thought her, tossing about alongside, so close indeed that at times she looked as if she would tumble on board. What she was after or what had happened he did not

know; there was no one to ask, and his curiosity burned like fire. But he knew it was something very important, perhaps shipwreck, that one catastrophe which is, I think, always present in the minds of boys when they first go to sea. Probably if he had known then he would have wondered why all the fuss was being made, being quite unable to understand the importance of the matter.

The vessel was just rounding the dangerous Skerries at the north-west point of Anglesey, and the wind was blowing almost dead on shore. Just at this dangerous point the rope which is called the tow-line or hawser, by which the tug was dragging the *Rosamund* along, "carried away," broke, and the helpless vessel, without any sails set, was drifting sideways on to the rocks. Now everything depended upon the skill and smartness of the crew, for there was another hawser on board and one also in the tug, only the passing of these ropes from one ship to the other in a heavy sea is always a great task, even with the freshest men and daylight. But night was coming on; the men were not only weary, but sick from their long spree ashore, and it now rested entirely with the power of the officers to urge the poor men on to another tremendous task whether the voyage of the *Rosamund* should proceed any farther or no. Happily all this was hidden from Jemmy, who only felt that something was going on which was strange and unusual. But even then he was spared further

speculation in the matter, for the steward going aft upon some errand caught sight of him, and with a gruff warning to him against skulking led him aft to his present place of duty by the ear; so that the great toil of getting the two vessels "tied together" again was not witnessed by him, nor did he ever know how narrow was the *Rosamund's* escape from being dashed to pieces on that terrible lee-shore. Now having done all that he could find to be done he sat down in the little stuffy pantry to await the officers' pleasure for coming below for their meal, and in less than a minute was fast asleep, all his novel surroundings entirely forgotten.

He was awakened rudely enough by the steward boxing his ears and scolding him for going to sleep. Hardly knowing what he was doing he managed to fetch the food and wait at table, both the captain and Mr. Burney making every allowance for his inexperience and weariness. And as soon as the meal was over and the table cleared he felt that he would gladly have bartered the supper he had felt so badly in want of for permission to fall down just where he was and sleep. But that could not be. He was obliged to wash up and put everything away—no leaving dirty crockery-ware about on board ship—and then the steward grudgingly told him he might turn in and think himself very lucky he hadn't to go and keep watch. This though harsh-sounding was less than the truth as to what

used to be the portion of poor boys who went to sea like this. Thank God those days are long past, and boys are treated as they should be, remembering that they are young and have to learn not only to do their work, but to endure, to bear the hardships their elders are used to.

So Jemmy tumbled into his darksome bunk without any attempt at undressing and was instantly perfectly happy, knowing and caring nothing of what was going on above and around him. Even the curious creaking of the vessel's timbers, and many strange noises among the piled masses of her cargo, the sulky murmur of the sea outside as if disappointed at not being able to get in, and the complaining cry of the wind overhead, had only the effect of sinking him deeper into the land of dreams. Happy, thrice happy, and all the more so because he did not know how happy he was, Jemmy slept on, while just overhead the dark, bitter, and stormy night presented all kinds of terrors to the mariners. But it is just this close contact with great and terrible things that breeds men, that brings the character and power in the struggle to overcome. Unfortunately the poor men who were compelled by their duties to face that stern night were feeling desperately unhappy, because they had not yet learned after their many lessons that it was a foolish way of spending their well-earned holiday ashore to get drunk and keep so. And they were now suffering not so much from cold and discom-

fort and the presence of danger, as from the miserable state of their bodies owing to their long "spree," as they called it, ashore.

Yet all unknown to them they were steadily being cured. The beautiful freshness of the sea, the heavy exertion, the necessity to keep going and forget their miseries in hard work, were making up their bundles of health again, and Jemmy, lucky boy, was sleeping through it all as serenely as if he had been a king's son in a palace bed. None of the struggles of that first night at sea meant anything to him, protected as he was by the friend who had certainly done his best to make the little chap's introduction to sea-life as pleasant as possible.

Jemmy was roughly awakened by the steward before daylight, and at first felt the desire to jump up and run away, because he thought he had been suddenly found by a policeman in one of his dock lairs. But in a moment the queer movement of the ship and the funny smell of the cabin reminded him of his position, and he struggled out of his bunk as quickly as possible, ready to do his best to obey. "Make haste and get Mr. Jones's coffee, and then start and scrub the cabin out," growled the steward. "Think you're goin' to sleep all night and all day I suppose, but you're wrong. I'm goin' t'eddiccate you, d'ye mind." Now Jemmy was already far too well "eddicated" in that special way hinted at by the steward to answer back, however great the temptation, so he made haste to

shake off dull sloth as soon as ever he could and obey orders. But when he reached the deck he almost forgot what he was there for in delight and wonder at the scene about and around him. The sun was just rising, and in that quarter of the sky there were many clear spaces between the mighty masses of cloud. Through these, as if they were openings in heaven, poured forth floods of glowing colour—gold, and crimson, and green, changing and melting one into the other, and tinting all the clouds around. But a deep fiery red was behind all, and this made as it were a wide road of blood across the heaving waves, reaching right to the ship. On the starboard quarter was a wonderful vessel under a veritable mountain of snowy sail, the 2000 ton hull hardly visible beneath it. This beautiful vision made him turn his eyes upward to his own ship, where to his amazement he found also an enormous spread of white sail, for the *Rosamund* was now under all canvas in spite of the threatening appearance of the weather. The careful captain was anxious to take advantage of a favourable direction of the wind to get out of these narrow, danger-crowded waters, and willing to take the inevitable risk in doing so.

Jemmy had only been about a minute taking in all this, but a shout from the steward at the galley door startled him into sudden activity, and he ran forward at his best speed to obey. But as he did so he caught sight of something huge and dark on

the lee side, just under the foot of the mainsail, which comes low down to the rail, saw too the watch on deck cosily clustered at the door of their den drinking coffee and smoking, saw as he came to the galley door the steward reach for the coffee-pot, and then all was swallowed up in one awful crash.

CHAPTER III

I HAVE often thought that people who read about terrible accidents, if they have feeling hearts, suffer as much as those who are the victims of such calamities do at the first moment or two; because I have been in some, and my experience is that all my sensations have been numbed by the sudden shock. I have felt no pain and no fear. And this knowledge has helped me not to be afraid of meeting with another trouble of the same kind. I believe that many youngsters of quick imagination left alone in the dark suffer more acutely than ever they do in after years as sailors and soldiers, having really learned what fear is. Therefore, though you may shudder for Jemmy, just think for a moment how suddenly this calamity had come upon him while I am trying to tell you what it was.

A huge steamship of the lowest type that carries cargo only, was steering right across the path of the *Rosamund*. Of course she had very few men to handle her, and the officer who should have been on the bridge looking out was in the paint-locker mixing paint. He thought that the man on the look-out would tell him if they were coming near a ship, but the look-out man thought that the

officer was sitting down behind the "dodger" or canvas screen on the bridge. And as it was broad daylight, the watchman slipped down below to fill his pipe. There he fell in with the only man on watch besides the helmsman in the wheel-house, and got into a whispered discussion which did not matter. The helmsman could not see out of the windows, which were all encrusted with salt, and did not care anyhow, as he was steering by the compass only.

On board the *Rosamund* I have told you what everybody was doing except the second mate. He was asleep. Of course it was very bad of him, but he had walked until he could walk no longer, and the moment that he sat down he fell fast asleep, because he was worn out—only three hours out of the last twenty-four to rest, and he was young. I have been like that many a time. The consequence of all this was that the *Mammoth* struck the *Rosamund* in the middle with that naked steel stem thirty feet high and ten thousand tons' weight coming at nine miles an hour behind it, and sheared her furious way through crashing timbers and falling masts like some raging monster bent only upon destruction. Jemmy stood as if turned to stone, looking at the oncoming of the destroyer, but unable to move. Then as the sea foamed up into the wide gap opened through the *Rosamund's* side he turned to flee, anywhere, blindly, but without any feeling like hope. And immediately he was

swallowed up in the roaring turmoil of water as a chip goes down in the whirling of a mill-dam, and all sense departed from him.

“Jemmy, Jemmy; rouse up, lad; pull yourself together, we’re all right.” These words came as if whispered very clearly through a long, long tunnel and reached Jemmy’s sense of hearing. He opened his eyes, and saw the face of his good friend Mr. Burney bending over him, saw too that they were alone in the midst of a wide expanse of tossing waves, kept above them by some support which was more to be felt than seen. And the poor lad then began to feel as if all his body was one bruise. As he became fully conscious the pain increased, until his young heart, plucky as it was, broke down, and he began to cry pitifully, miserably, but quietly, as if to himself. This was more than Mr. Burney could bear, and he said chokingly, “Don’t, Jemmy; dear lad, don’t cry, I can’t bear it. I know your small body finds it hard to bear, but crying won’t ease you one bit. Cheer up, you’re quite safe as yet.” And Jemmy actually did manage to pull himself together and even smile wanly in the mate’s face as he said in little more than a whisper, “This is an adventure, isn’t it, sir? I suppose you’ve often been like this afore, sir, haven’t you?” “No, Jemmy,” answered the mate wearily, “hardly like this. My life has been very simple and free from accidents so far, that is up till now, so that I’m as new to this as you are. Never mind, we’ll pull

through it somehow, please God! Let me shift you a bit and try if we can't be a little less cramped. And then if the sea will only go down a bit, we may get a little warmth into our soaked bodies."

So saying, the mate, balancing himself very carefully, loosened the lashings with which he had bound himself and Jemmy to what now showed itself as a wooden pig-pen, a great square box thing with iron bars in front. It was lying in the water half sunken with the front uppermost, and the man and boy were lashed to the bars securely. As the *Rosamund* was going down the mate rushing forward had cut adrift the pen from its lashings, and snatching Jemmy in one arm had grabbed the bars with the other, holding them in a clutch that almost tore his arm from its socket in the terrible whirl of the sea as the ship sank from beneath their feet. It was fortunate for both that Mr. Burney was in the habit of always carrying a pocketful of small lines of various kinds, spunyarn, marline, housline, as it is called on board ship, and as soon as the turmoil around had ceased and the frail support upon which they floated was a bit quieter, he managed to get this out and make the boy and himself secure. Then he tried to revive the lad, who looked as if the sudden shock had killed him, so limp and pale was he. And when at last Jemmy opened his eyes and spoke, the mate felt as glad as if they were rescued.

But soon he realised how dangerous was their position. They lay so low in the water, that they were not easily to be seen by any passing ship; and besides, although they were right in the track of outward bound vessels, about midway between the Land's End and Cape Clear, the space is so great, and the vessels are so few, that it seemed as if their chances of being seen were very small. He knew too that although it was not yet noon, the time before dark was very short, and in their exposed position it seemed impossible that they should live through another night. So he prayed for rescue, very simply, as people do pray for life, feeling that unless God helps them by working a miracle they are lost. Jemmy heard him, and felt that God was very near. He had only the dimmest idea of who God was, but Mr. Burney's words and behaviour made him believe that they must be helped, and that soon. This belief was strengthened by the cheerfulness with which the mate turned to him and began to talk about the many ways in which help could come. He also felt able to keep to himself the sense of thirst that was hurting him very much, from the thought that it would only make the feeling worse for both of them to talk about it.

But for all that it seemed a very long time before they both started as far upright as their lashings would allow at the sound of voices and the splash of oars. Then a boat came gently alongside of

their raft ; willing hands cut them loose, and lifted them into safety. Neither of them spoke ; they could not have answered the questions put to them had they understood the language spoken by their rescuers. However, nothing now seemed to matter, and they just lay quietly bearing the pain all over their bodies, while the boat was vigorously rowed alongside of a large ship. There was a great hubbub of strange words, much bumping and tumbling about, until presently the boat rose jerkily in the air, being hoisted up with the rescued ones in it. They were very gently lifted out and carried into a berth, stuffy and smelling frousilily of oil and garlic, but to their pained senses the shelter seemed almost like Paradise. A little warm soup and wine was brought and given them very carefully, every spoonful as it ran down their throats feeling like new life-blood. Then they were as tenderly stripped and examined for injuries, of which happily they had none ; dry clothing was put on them ; they were laid in bunks, and almost immediately sank into deep delicious sleep.

When Jemmy awoke it was, as he thought, still day, for he could not know that he had slept for fourteen hours. He stretched and looked round for his friend, but the mate had gone. It was not long, though, before Mr. Burney came in, looking worn and haggard from the effects of his sufferings, and seeing Jemmy awake said, " Ah, my boy, and how do you feel ? " " All right, thankee, sir, "

said Jemmy, "but I'm awful hungry. I feel as if I could eat anything." The mate smiled at this, and told him that would soon be put right, for their rescuers were very kind. "But," he went on, "I can't get them to put back and land us, and I'm afraid we are booked for a most unprofitable passage to South America. She is a big Italian ship belonging to Genoa, an' she's bound for Montevideo. From what I can see of her she'll take about three months to get there, and then we shall have to take our chance about getting home again. But there, I've no business to worry your young head about that; you'll be happy enough I've no doubt, and after all it doesn't matter about me. I'll go and see about getting something to eat."

Left to himself Jemmy looked round for his clothes, and found them dry and ready to get into. Then he wondered what made the mate so glum. Why didn't Mr. Burney feel, as he did, what a splendid adventure they were having? Sunk in mid-ocean, floating on a raft, picked up by a foreign ship (she might be a pirate? certainly the men he had seen looked like pirates). Oh, it was splendid. If only he could get something to eat! and just then a boy of about his own age came in carrying a big plateful of something smoking hot and smelling—well, it was queer no doubt—but—it made his mouth dribble. The boy grinned almost from ear to ear, showing a set of teeth like a handful of

pearls, and uttered a string of words which Jemmy did not understand in the least. But that did not matter, for he knew the language spoken by that Italian boy's eyes, the universal language of goodwill and kindness that can be interpreted by a dog or a child, and never misleads either. So he took his food and devoured it, while his new acquaintance looked on, murmuring words of pity and appreciation in his soft Italian at the way in which this English boy was eating. He could sympathise, for he too had been hungry many a time, so hungry, that he had been fain to eat things that even Jemmy would have shuddered at, and there is nothing like knowledge of suffering to make us feel for the pain of others.

At last Jemmy finished ; he had eaten everything brought, and staggering to his feet, he followed his provider on deck and forward to the galley. Here he sat comfortably watching the energetic movements of the boy-cook, who, perhaps from boyish desire to show off, flung himself around in great style, making Jemmy stare and laugh almost at the same time. Now and then a swarthy, smiling face would be thrust in at the door, and a perfect squall of talk would rage, with shoulders, hands, and eyes all a-work at the same time. But all the talk, all the gestures concerned Jemmy, and were full of kindness towards him. That he could not fail to know, and in consequence began to enjoy himself to the full, being, as we have seen, of a

sunny good-nature, ready to respond to anything pleasant and to endure the reverse patiently. At the same time he kept wondering how Mr. Burney was getting on, and was feeling anxious to see the one man who above all others he looked up to as a friend. But Mr. Burney was at that time engaged in an almost hopeless attempt to make the Italian captain understand the details of the collision, and also to make clear how urgent was the necessity for him to be put ashore very soon, or at least on board of some homeward bound vessel. Never in all his sea-career had Mr. Burney felt the want of knowing another tongue beside his own so much as he did now. I am not going to prose, I hope, but I would like if I could to impress upon boys the utter value of picking up languages. The knowledge of other tongues beside your own is full of pleasure, full of profit, full of interest; in fact, I know of no form of education that repays the learner more fully. I don't mean the kind of idiotic teaching that keeps a boy for years at grammar, and then lets him go into the world hopelessly unable to make himself understood in any one of the languages he has been so painfully studying the construction of.

So Jemmy looked for his friend in vain, and had to amuse himself as best he could with the jolly, ferocious-looking Italians, who kept popping in to have a look at him and try to make him understand what was in their minds about him. Presently,

feeling mightily refreshed he came out of the galley and wandered about the deck, gazing with deepest interest, if without much understanding, at all that was going on around him. As he had not any opportunity yet of becoming acquainted with sailors' duties he was not in a position to criticise, but even he could not help noticing how different were these men from the Italians he had hitherto known as organ-grinders and ice-cream sellers. He could not help feeling that they were men indeed. Of their seamanship he was no judge, but already he was cured of much of that ignorant contempt which home-staying British boys often show towards foreigners of whatever nation, a curious condition of mind that when it lasts until manhood makes the Briton so much disliked abroad. Then to his great delight he saw Mr. Burney come out of his cabin. He ran towards his friend eagerly with questioning eyes, but seeing how worn and haggard were Mr. Burney's features he paused, the words of delight frozen on his lips. The mate looked down upon the boy with a sad yet kindly expression as he said, "Well, laddie, how are you feeling now? quite recovered from your bad time, I hope?" Jemmy's face beamed again, and he replied, "Yes, sir, I'm all right. They're a funny-lookin' lot o' fellows, an' I don't know what they say to me, but they are all very kind, an' perhaps I shall learn to understand them presently." "Yes, Jemmy," answered the mate, "I expect you will, especially

as you'll have plenty of time, for I don't suppose we shall have a chance to leave this ship until she reaches Montevideo. At least I see no prospect of it, and so, as I never try and fight against what I can't help, I am going to be as contented as I can. And I hope you'll do the same. We must try and help in the work of the ship as much as we can, and I will teach you all I am able to of sailorising." Jemmy waited a minute before saying anything as if he were afraid of hurting the mate's feelings, and then with a bright laugh said, "Oh, I'm all right, sir; I feel jolly fine. It doesn't matter to me where I am, you know, sir, as long as I'm with you."

And so the two melted into the life of the ship, and became to all appearance part of the crew. Jemmy's sea education began at once, and not only did Mr. Burney take every available opportunity of teaching him the mysteries of knots and splices in rope and wire, but the rough-looking, merry Italians, all of whom took a great fancy to him, were ever ready to show him anything in the way of their business that they knew, and also found great fun in trying to teach him the barbarous dialect of Italian which they spoke, so that he was far better off than the average apprentice to a sea life, since his education in everything that could go to make a good sailor was the special care of one expert teacher and the occasional pastime of all hands. The ex-mate never

again spoke to Jemmy about his own wasted time, or complained about the leisurely way in which the clumsy ship went crawling South, as if it did not matter a bit when she got to her journey's end. Of course, it sorely fretted him, but he got much comfort from looking after the boy.

This was the happiest time in Jemmy's life so far. Full of curiosity about things all around him, he had only to ask to know, he was perfectly healthy, well fed and comfortably looked after, with all the wonders of the mighty deep spread before him by day and night, and, to crown all, he had no regrets about loved ones left behind whom he desired to see again. Moreover, he was at that beautiful age when thoughts of the future do not worry us, when we are only concerned with what is now happening, and we unconsciously obey the command to take no thought for to-morrow. But Jemmy was, all unknown to himself, bound to have adventures whether he wished for them or not. The old ship was not only slow, but carelessly handled, so she got out of the track usually made by sailing ships bound to the Southern seas, and the result was that she fell in with a long series of calms and light airs, none of which seemed able to make up its mind to blow for five minutes in any one direction. So they drifted about in utter loneliness in the great space of the deep, wherein it appeared as if no other vessel had ever or would ever come. By day the long shining levels of the

sea stretched away to the sky-line and there seemed to join the heavens, so perfectly smooth, serene, and clear were they. By night it often looked as if the ship was hung in the middle of a great dark blue globe, star-sprinkled and deep as eternity. Sometimes, all unknown to anybody, Jemmy would climb up aloft on to the main royal yard, and sit there gazing around him into the emptiness, and the solemn scene filled his mind with peace. He had nothing there to spoil the impression, for never having given his attention to a school-master or been able to think of anything more complicated than just getting enough to eat and a place to sleep, his mind was like a blank sheet of paper upon which one may presently write words that will live for ever.

Forgive me, dear boys! it is hard to remember how eager you are to hear of actual deeds and not thoughts. But I had to tell you about Jemmy's habits in order to show you how it came about that he was the means of saving some fellow-creatures from a miserable death, and really, although that is rather out of place to tell here, laying the foundation of his future. One night at about nine o'clock he stole away from a group of seamen, who had been trying hard to explain to the mate and himself some of their exploits, and had only succeeded in making him at least weary of trying to understand, and had crept up to the maintop-gallant yard, whence he had a splendid look-out

over the dark quiet sea. There was scarcely any wind, except in a few streaks that had no effect upon the ship at all, and there was hardly any movement in the sea itself to make her roll. So Jemmy sat up there in the warm night and basked in beauty, not thinking of anything specially except how enjoyable and peaceful it was. He did not look up at the sky much, for the awful vastness of it made him shiver as he thought of the endless depths of the heavens, but gazed steadily out over the sea with all its wondrous lights, both the reflections of the stars and the fires of the deep itself. But to-night there was an almost blazing moon, so bright as to make the eye ache to look at her, and she poured forth upon the sleeping waters a flood of light. And look where Jemmy would, his eager gaze always returned to this wide path of silver until at last his eyes were stayed in their wandering by the vision of something black and unmoving. It did not look like a ship—more like a rock; and at last, his curiosity becoming almost unbearable, he climbed down from his lofty perch and hurriedly sought the mate for information. The mate went to the officer of the watch and got the loan of his night glasses, making him understand that there was something unusual to be seen, and very soon made out from aloft that there was either a derelict ship or a rock at no great distance, say a couple of miles, from the ship. Believing that it must be the former, he made haste down, and by vigorous signs

managed to make the officer understand what he thought he had seen. Once the officer had convinced himself that there was something well worth inquiring into he called the captain, and the whole ship's company was soon awake. A boat was lowered, of which Mr. Burney was allowed to take charge, and with four men at the oars she sped away into the mysterious night.

By this time all hands were in the highest state of excitement, and Jemmy in particular felt that this night was indeed worth living for. Was it not his discovery, and who could say what might come of it? He watched with keenest eagerness every movement made; and, after the boat had disappeared in the darkness, kept the most earnest watch upon that part of the sea whither they had gone, finding the time intolerably long until their return. They were gone nearly three hours, and when at last the boat came in sight again it was quite near the ship, for the moon had gone down, and it was now too dark to see any distance. Before they came alongside the captain hailed them, and was answered by a regular storm of replies in Italian, which seemed to revive all the excitement and bring it up almost to fever heat. But amidst it all there was orderly preparation for some event which Jemmy could form no idea of. A sort of chair was rigged up and attached to a whip from the cro'jack yard, then, when the boat came alongside, the chair was lowered gently into it and hoisted with the

greatest care. Jemmy, pressing forward, saw it swing inboard, and from it there was lifted the wasted form of a woman, apparently dead, so motionless was she. Very tenderly she was carried into the cabin; and the chair was lowered again, bringing up the next time two children, just little skeletons, but still showing signs of life. They were carried off to the cabin for attendance, and then one after another three men were hoisted on board, all evidently at nearly their last gasp.

When the bustle and excitement of getting the poor sufferers duly cared for had died away, Jemmy managed to get a few minutes with Mr. Burney, who, looking gravely at him, said, "Well, my dear lad, you have had the privilege to-night of saving six lives, and that should make you thankful till your dying day. It isn't many who are allowed to have that high honour. If it had not been for that funny little fancy of yours for perching aloft like a booby-bird at night, we should no doubt have drifted out of sight of those unfortunate people before morning. It is an almost miraculous rescue, for in any case I don't think they could have lived through another day. They were all huddled together upon the deck of a ship, whose cargo kept her afloat, but only just at the water's edge. Of course, we know nothing of their adventures so far, only we had a tremendous task to get on board of her, she was so overgrown with sea-slime—that long

snaky weed that comes upon anything that the sea is continually washing over. Poor creatures, they must have had a dreadful time of it, and even now it is doubtful if they can pull round, they seem so far gone. It does indeed look as if we were picked up and brought on board here by a special Providence, in order that they might be saved. Now go below, Jemmy, and turn in; you must want sleep badly, but don't forget to thank God. I feel sure you are going to do something great, and I am ever so thankful that I had the pleasure of meeting you. Good-night." And Jemmy went and turned in, full of joy.

When he awoke, the ship was bowling along merrily before a fine strong breeze, which had sprung up in the middle watch; and it was with a sense of great enjoyment that he remembered the events of the past night. Besides, as he met man after man of his swarthy shipmates, they looked upon him as if they thought him a being most highly favoured; as if, indeed, there was something about him that they had not realised before. Now this puzzled Jemmy greatly, for he was a jolly little chap, no more thoughtful or better than the average boy, and but for the fact that he had been so fortunate in falling into the care of a good loving man, not at all likely to have ever done any good for himself. In fact, the chances of finding himself in prison were many, as he had often been driven to steal in order to keep body and soul together. But

after all his chief curiosity was about those whom he had been the means of rescuing. He felt, in a measure, as if they were his property, and he was for that reason as anxious about their welfare as a boy could be. So as soon as he saw Mr. Burney he ran to him and asked him earnestly if he knew how the newly saved ones were faring. All that his friend could tell him was that they were still alive, but very weak and low. The three men were picking up fast, and—would Jemmy like to see them ?

Nothing could have been said that would have pleased the boy more ; and Mr. Burney led the way to the room in the forward house where they lay, those sufferers. But when he saw them he was afraid. He had never looked upon death since Granny died ; but, like most of us, he had an idea what a dead person would be like, and at the first glance he felt sure that those three men were dead. For their faces looked like skulls with parchment stretched over them, and the coarse growth of their beards made the hollows in cheeks and eyes and temples look more horrible. He shrunk away shuddering, until Mr. Burney said kindly, "Don't be afraid, lad, they're not dead though they look like it. They have much improved since last night, when it really seemed as if they could not live more than a few minutes." As he spoke one of the sufferers stirred uneasily, and muttered : "Water, oh, for a drop of water !" Quickly, but gently, Mr.

Burney moved to the man's side, and, taking from a pot of rice-water a spoonful of the soft liquid, put it to the parched lips, which sucked it in greedily, while a hand looking like a claw of some great bird groped out and tried to grasp the pot. But the mate said soothingly, "Gently, old man, a little at a time ; you shall have a big drink presently." And the dull eyes opened, peering out from the deep caverns where they were hidden, while a hollow voice murmured, " Thank you."

" There, Jemmy," said the mate, as they came out into the sweet air again, " you have looked upon suffering in its most terrible form, and I hope that, although it is painful to you, it will do you good. We suffered a little, but these three men have known all the bitterness of death without dying. Now run and get your breakfast and be happy, and don't forget to be thankful." And Jemmy gladly obeyed, feeling greatly relieved to get away from that sad sight and yet glad that he had seen it. Presently the work of the day with all its interests took his mind off what he had seen, and the coming alongside of a grand school of porpoises gave him a splendid opportunity for enjoyment. The lively Italians left off all work, and getting out the harpoon, fastened it to a strong rope, and all the watch gathered on the forecastle ready to haul one of the sea-pigs on board as soon as ever their comrades on the back-ropes under the jib-boom should strike one. Presently down flew the barbed weapon, the

harpooner shouted, the men on deck hauled with all their might, and up came the prey, a great creature weighing about three hundred pounds. It was soon safe on deck, and Jemmy was examining it with excited interest, thinking that such a curious creature surely had never been seen before. He of course thought it was a big fish, though he could not understand why it had skin like an eel, or why it had a hole on the top of its head which opened and shut as it lay dying as if it were gasping for breath, which indeed it was. But he was still more interested when one of the men began to skin the creature and he saw that it had a coating of oily fat about an inch thick all over it, underneath which the flesh looked like dark-coloured beef, while the thick blood ran freely, just as if a pig had been killed. He was almost furiously anxious to know more about this wonderful animal, but his friend, to whom he looked for all explanations about everything that went on, was not there, and the rapid chatter of the Italian seamen did not convey one idea to him. Only they made him understand by their most expressive sign-language that the creature was very good to eat, and that its capture would come in specially handy now for the poor invalids, which made him glad, and, besides, gave him an idea that this catch was specially sent in order that the rescued ones might have some nourishing food.

Now, whether he was right or wrong does not

matter; it was good for him to think so, and when he was put to work to clear up the mess that had been made on deck, he felt quite proud of the job, and did it well, as if to show that he fully appreciated the privilege.

CHAPTER IV

FOR the next three days the patients hovered between life and death, except the children, who recovered so rapidly, that on the second day, in the afternoon, Jemmy was sent for by the captain into the cabin to amuse the youngsters, who the captain had found to be English, or at least English speaking. Jemmy went, shyly enough at first, but upon hearing the children speaking in his own language he soon forgot his diffidence, and much to the amusement of the black-browed, stern-looking captain the rather gloomy cabin soon rang with their combined laughter; for although these children had suffered terribly, the memory of those sufferings was as usual mercifully short, and they were overjoyed at finding a real boy who could talk to them in their own tongue. Of course Jemmy could gather very little of the real facts of the case from them, that is, how the trouble came about, but he did learn that the vessel's name had been the *Esra Snow* of Windsor, Nova Scotia, and that she had been bound from St. John, New Brunswick, to England—London they thought, but were not quite sure. Also that they were the twin son and daughter of

the captain, and that their names were Eddie and Freda Wilson. They piteously implored him to tell them where dada was, and how mamma was getting on, and Jemmy was in sore trouble at not being able to answer them satisfactorily. But he choked down his sympathy, which was nearly making him cry, and bravely did his best to amuse them by telling them funny stories of his life in Liverpool; not that there had ever been much fun in those days for him, but that looking back upon them the hardships were softened into romance, and his quaint way of telling about the daily skirmishing with the wolf of hunger, and his nightly search for a sheltered corner where the dreaded policeman would not find him and rout him out, sounded to them like a fairy tale, yes, funnier even than the fairy tales they had heard so often.

When the captain saw how successful his experiment had been he was delighted, patted Jemmy on the head, and said something which the boy, looking into his face, rightly considered to express great satisfaction. Better still, the captain spoke to the steward, who hastened to bring Jemmy an award of merit in the shape of a huge chunk of cake. With this in his fist he was dismissed forward, and of course he ran straight to his friend with it, to share his prize, for selfishness with Jemmy, as with most street boys of his type, was almost an unknown vice. But there, unselfishness must in its best expression always be looked for among the poor,

whether young or old. Of course Mr. Burney refused to share Jemmy's prize, but he speedily found a sailor who had no sort of objection, and indeed it was very little of that gift that Jemmy ate at all, which was all to his benefit. He told Mr. Burney all that he knew, but the mate agreed that for any real information of value they must wait until their patients were well enough to talk. And that happened on the fourth day, a really wonderful time for their recovery, remembering what they had been through by their appearance.

At last the time arrived when the stronger of the sufferers, replying to Mr. Burney's often repeated inquiry, "How do you feel?" said, "Will you tell me where I am, and how I came here?" Very quietly and carefully the mate told him the simple story, giving full credit of course to Jemmy for his share in the discovery of the castaways. The listener was very weak still, but his mind was quite clear, it was evident, for when Mr. Burney had finished he said brokenly, as two big tears rolled down his cheeks, "I'd like to see that boy later. At present I am too low. An' now, mister, I may as well tell you my story, that is, for as long as my memory lasted. We were bound from St. John with the usual cargo and deck-load of lumber for London. Although I am a blue-nose (Canadian), I hate a deck-load like poison; but then, what is a fellow to do, especially when he is as poor as I am? I was specially set against one this voyage, for I

had the wife and my two kiddies with me, bless 'em, and there was no comfort for them at all; but it was of no use protesting against it, for I knew how many poor men were waiting about hungry for a job who would have gone to sea in a sieve if they could only have kept her afloat. Well, we sailed, and from the day we left port we had the worst of weather. My men were good, every one of them, but they got worn out, what with the bitter cold and the stinking den below they had to live in, the bad food, and the wet everywhere. Every day something went wrong aloft, and good repairs could not be made because of the wild weather. So ship and crew got weaker together. I edged her south to try and get warmer weather until she was well out of the track of all the home-ward-bounders, and at last got a full day's sunshine. It was just like a glimpse of heaven. But it was only a peep, for the very next day it came on to blow harder than ever. We managed to make all sail fast somehow, but very poorly, for the men were played out, and consequently at midnight, in the height of the gale, the sails blew adrift and thrashed the masts out of her, which they never would have done if the rigging had not been rotten and the shrouds worked so slack. Anyhow, the three masts went, and before we could get at the lee rigging to cut it away, the wreckage alongside battered great holes in her, the sea poured in, and she became water-logged.

Then being so low in the water the seas made a clean breach over her, and those poor fellows that weren't washed overboard were drowned in their kennel below, or perished of hunger and cold. We were not quite so badly off aft at first, for a bit of the cabin was dry, but she gradually settled, until we too had to take refuge on the deck, and that without provisions, for that awful gale still continued, and the green seas kept sweeping over her, poor old tub. And there was no shelter either; we were just lashed as you found us on top of that dreadful deck-load, exposed to all the weather. So we drifted south out of the track of all ships, but into the warmth, and that is why we are alive; for if the weather had remained as cold as when that last gale first struck us, we could not have lived more than one night. How long we have been existing on our bodies I don't know, but I do know that we are brought back to life by a miracle of God's mercy, which I don't seem able at present to be properly thankful for."

He ceased, and fell back exhausted, while Mr. Burney hastened to give him a little of the wine which stood always near. Then to keep him quiet the mate told him the story of the *Rosamund*, and before he had finished he found that the other two men were evidently listening intently. They were now fully conscious and mending so rapidly, that it seemed possible that in five or six days they might be able to resume duty again if the

need arose. That night the captain sent for Mr. Burney and introduced him to Mrs. Wilson, who, very wan and weak, but evidently greatly recovered, was reclining in his cabin with Eddie and Freda by her side. She received him gratefully, as being glad of some one apparently in authority who could understand her. And he lost no time in letting her know that her husband was safe, out of danger, and longing to see her. The children immediately clamoured for dada, but she tried to calm them, telling them how anxious she was, but that as long as she knew poor dada was safe she was willing to wait patiently.

But oh, what a struggle the captain did have to let Mr. Burney know that he had decided to run into Rio Janeiro with his passengers. It was a perfect hurricane of words, before which Mr. Burney could only bow, and wait until, by patient motions of the hands, pointing of the fingers, overhauling of charts, &c., they managed to come to some agreement. Of course it was a good thing for the patient mate, who was more than ever satisfied that he had not fretted over lost time. Making the captain understand his earnest thanks by such contortions of the body as very few Englishmen could have made, Mr. Burney hurried off to the convalescents in the forward house to tell them the news. They rather wondered at his enthusiasm, being as yet too feeble to feel much joy of anything. In fact the captain was quite down-hearted

at his ill-fortune, and his mate and steward (the other two survivors) made every effort to cheer him up, but unsuccessfully. However, he did brighten up a little when Mr. Burney told him that he would be able to see his wife that afternoon. And then Jemmy came in. Dear boy, he always seemed so jolly happy that it was hard to be miserable where he was. And when Mr. Burney told him of the captain's change of plan and of the early prospect of their leaving the ship he became quite excited, and his boisterous laughter filled the little apartment; for, in the first place, this looked like more change, and secondly, it was evidently very pleasant to his friend the mate.

During the next fortnight the wind was fresh, the weather always fair, and Mr. Burney was busy teaching Jemmy things as if he had a big examination to pass on his arrival. I know of few more delightful pastimes than to be learning what you very much want to know when your teacher is some one you love and believe in with all your heart. If only all schools could be run on those lines, what a well-educated people we should be! But there, it's of no use crying for the moon, so we won't waste any more time over it. Jemmy was perfectly happy, and I am quite sure that when the tremendous cone of the Sugar-loaf mountain which lies at the back of Rio harbour was reached, few able seamen in either Royal Navy or Mercantile Marine could have taught him any-

thing in the way of sailors' work with rope and canvas.

But I must not be too quick. I must mention how when the captain of the lost ship met his dear wife they sat and looked at each other as if it was the Resurrection morning, and they had both met again after death; and how Eddie and Freda climbed all over their father, ready to eat him, but never forgetting to tell him about Jemmy. "Such a nice boy, dada, he talks so funny—but he *is* funny, an' good. Oh my! he tells us tales about how he lived before he went to sea that sound like a sure-enough book. But he doesn't make 'em up as he goes along. *Dear old dad*"—and there were more kisses and huggings. And Jemmy was brought along and talked to by father and mother. The children, bless them, were full of schemes for Jemmy's benefit, to which the ex-captain and his wife listened sadly, knowing, as they did, how poor and bleak was their outlook upon life. But of course they did not spoil their dear ones' enjoyment by telling them anything of the sad change in their fortunes. They just tried to smile with them and forget for a while their own misfortunes in the certain knowledge that they had been mercifully spared from the ocean grave which had engulfed all their late shipmates. And so the pleasant days sped on, the weather uniformly fine, and the wind steadily fair, until the beautiful harbour of Rio de Janeiro opened up before their

gaze, and the good, old, easy-going ship rolled easily in, coming in leisurely fashion up to her anchorage.

The anchor was no sooner down than the captain appeared in full shore-going rig, and only waving his hand reassuringly, got into the boat which was waiting, and departed for the shore, leaving his passengers in a state of uncertainty as to what was going to happen next. But he was no long time away, and when he returned he brought with him the representatives of both the Italian and the British Governments in the persons of the interpreters of the consulates. Then there was a pleasant scene, as for the first time the good captain of the Italian ship became aware how deeply his services of humanity had been appreciated in those whom he and his crew had saved from death. A still more affecting scene was witnessed when the swarthy crew assembled upon the ship's side to bid their passengers farewell. It was quite a triumphal departure, and there were also many tears. But Jemmy was the hero of the hour. He had never been kissed so much in his conscious life. Perhaps the poor mother whom he had never known had so smothered him with those marks of affection, but that he was unconscious of. Now all those bearded sailors pressed forward and hugged him, and kissed him, and wept over him, until his poor little head was nearly turned, and he felt strangely weak and faint. But at last that tempestuous leave-taking was over, and the boat in which the whole party

was seated was being vigorously rowed ashore with the farewell cries of their hospitable shipmates ringing in their ears and their minds in a whirl, unable to take in all this show of love by those who had been in a very special sense their saviours.

Another ordeal awaited them when they reached the shore. The story of their sufferings had gone before them, and a great crowd awaited them on the wharf which received them with shoutings, as if they had been victors in some great battle. As they landed there were congratulations in many tongues, many expressions of sympathy, and when at last they drove off to the British Consul's office they were again followed with cries of sympathy and admiration. They soon reached the Consul's office, and found themselves in a very different atmosphere at once, for the Consul, however kindly disposed, had his duty to perform towards his Government, and he was not permitted to allow mere sentiment to sway his mind. So he put them through a severe cross-examination as to how their troubles had arisen, and what had become of their clothes, &c. He was especially careful to inform Captain Wilson that his wife and children, being passengers, had no claim at all upon the Government for clothes or passage, and that any help in money afforded them could only be on the understanding that it must certainly be repaid.

Then a strange thing happened. An elderly gentleman in a quaint sort of uniform had been

sitting on a stool in a corner of the room ever since the little party had entered it, but had paid no attention apparently to anything that was going on, just sitting with his hat over his eyes as if half asleep. But when the Consul had finished his remarks about the shipwrecked captain's wife and children, this strange figure in the corner suddenly started into life, and in a voice that thrilled everybody hearing it said, "Excuse me, Mr. Consul, for interfering, but I think that this trial of prisoners for the crime of being unfortunate, and nearly losing their lives in addition to losing all their means of living, has gone far enough. I s'pose it's necessary, but I know too that it is inhuman, and when I think of the millions that are wasted upon highly placed thieves, it makes me angry. My dear people (to the little group that stood like criminals awaiting sentence), will you listen to me a moment? I am a rich man, and what the world calls eccentric, meaning, I suppose, that I like to act in a common-sense way. I've got a 2000-ton yacht lying in the harbour, and I'll gladly take you all off the hands of the British Government, which apparently dislikes more to give an outfit to a distressed sailor than a thousand pounds to a foreign intriguer who is nothing but an enemy to all things British. I don't blame the Consul, who can't help it, but come with me and let me have the joy of doing you some good."

"Allow me to say, Mr. Smith," interposed the

Consul in his best official manner, "that your remarks are quite uncalled for, and that the Government which I have the honour to represent is always ready to do the right and just thing by all her subjects. At the same time, if you really mean to take these distressed persons off my hands, I shall be very glad to afford you every facility for so doing, only it must be distinctly understood that you assume all responsibility for their safe arrival at home."

"Good gracious, my dear man," replied Mr. Smith testily, "haven't I said so? And in any case, they can't be worse off with me than being sent home as paupers at one shilling each per day, while that dear woman and her children—but there, I'm wasting time. Do you understand that I'm taking charge of these good people, and pledge my honour and my credit to see them well cared for and landed wherever they wish? Because if that is all clear and officially recognised, the sooner we are out of this the better. The air is foul—it chokes me." The Consul smiled officially and said, "Very well, Mr. Smith, my clerk shall wait upon you with the usual documents, and—I wish you good day." And the representative of our beloved country turned upon his heel and stalked into the inner office, while Mr. Smith, becoming suddenly active, marshalled the little party into the street, called conveyances, saw them seated, and gave orders to drive to the best hotel in the place.

Arriving there, this strange man showed wonderful activity. His orders flew like sudden squalls, and all the staff of the hotel became active (as activity is understood in South America). The best rooms in the hotel were open to them, and when they had been shown to them with every mark of respect, silence reigned for a little while. Then came bowing tradesmen, requesting their orders for whatever they needed, stating that El Senhor Smith had commanded that they were to be supplied with all necessaries, and that it only remained for their excellencies to give the word, and everything they wished for should be promptly forthcoming.

Poor people, they hardly knew what to do. It was all like some beautiful dream, from which they would presently awake to find themselves humbly begging for the cold charity of the Consul, that they hardly dared let themselves think of it as real. Mr. Burney was the first to act, as he believed it was all right. He said, "Well, here goes; I want a decent rig for the boy and myself, for we're hardly fit to be seen, and other things we can settle about after." The outfitter man bowed low, and suggested as an idea worthy of notice that his men should bring all such clothing, &c., as would be necessary for a long voyage, from which the gentlemen and lady might select as they needed. And he most earnestly assured him that his orders were that they were to have *everything* they needed;

the Senhor Smith's commands were most precise on the point, expense was of no importance whatever.

They agreed to his suggestion, and behold, presently enter like the slaves of the genii in the "Arabian Nights," porters bearing loads, whose contents they unpacked and spread out upon tables for selection. It took the grateful folks but a very short time to choose some plain garments for present wear, but having done so, nothing would induce them to put by any more until they had seen Mr. Smith. Their behaviour astounded the Portuguese tradesmen, who exhausted themselves in trying to persuade them that they were wasting time and precious opportunity in not availing themselves of the generous Englishman's offer. For like good business men themselves, they wanted to secure the order in case of a change of mind on the part of their customer, and this unwillingness to take advantage of so liberal an offer seemed to them little short of lunacy. However, they made no further progress and presently departed, wringing their hands in despair of ever understanding these mad *Inglesos*.

The call for dinner came, and the party came together, looking for the first time since their late disaster quite respectable, as far as clothing went. They were welcomed by their host, who insisted upon Captain Wilson taking the head of the table, and on having the two children seated one on each

side of him, with Jemmy next to Freda. My, but that was a jolly meal. Mr. Smith was just like a boy with those children, and had besides a wonderful knack of putting every one at their ease, so that before the dinner was half over you would have thought it was a wedding party, everybody seemed so thoroughly happy. I haven't described Mr. Smith, for really he doesn't want much description. He was quite an ordinary-looking man of middle height, about fifty years old, with a rather worn face burnt by tropical suns, and a pointed beard such as they wear in the Navy, plentifully sprinkled with white hairs. His head was nearly bald, and he had beautiful kind eyes, which twinkled delightfully when he made the children shriek with laughter.

When they came to the dessert the captain rose and said, "Mr. Smith and friends, I can't make a speech, but I must say how grateful we all are to our generous host." He stopped. Mr. Smith stopped him. He said, "Captain Wilson and friends, please humour me by treating me as these dear children are doing. Believe me, what I have had the pleasure of doing, and hope still to do, deserves no thanks, since I am getting more delight out of it than anybody else can. As I told you, I am a man of wealth, much more than I can spend. I hate gambling, society, and professional charity, which so often means a shilling given away, and a pound spent on the machinery for using it. I

like to spend my money in doing good as I see it, not for thanks or seeing my name in print, but because it gives me joy in doing it. So if you want to thank me, let me do all I want to do for you without making any fuss about it, for it is not often I get the luxury of doing what I am trying to do now. One word more before we leave the table. I hear that you have refused to order your outfits from the man I sent. Please humour me in this, and order all that you would get for a dear friend who was going a twelve-months' voyage round the world, supposing you had plenty of money to do it with. And don't think of the expense. Come, let us go into the drawing-room."

CHAPTER V

THAT was a happy party, the happiest I dare say that ever met in that hotel. As the Americans say, they had more fun that night than you could shake a stick at. But after Jemmy and the children had gone to bed, Mr. Smith gathered his friends together, and suddenly changing the boisterous, boyish air of gaiety he had worn all the evening, said, "Now, dear friends, just a few minutes' serious business before we follow the wise kiddies. You have all had a mighty bad time. Misfortune has overtaken you through no fault of your own, and I know that it has been a serious matter for you, not only for your bodies, but for your future prospects. Now I want to make you an offer. Come away with me for a cruise, anywhere that's pleasant, I don't care where, for in a ship like mine one can be comfortable at the North Pole, and have a long rest. Have a good holiday for once in your lives. And I promise you that your time shall not be wasted. When you wish to return to work full of health and energy, I will do what is possible to me to find you openings such as you can take without any loss of self-respect. And let me again assure you that I do this for my pleasure, and I

am not at all deserving of thanks or any other form of reward. Now good-night, and let me know your answer in the morning, after you have been over the *Samaritan*."

It being evident that their host wished them to consider the meeting over they all retired, each busy with his separate thoughts. But the one thing they thought of most was, that had it not been for a miracle they would all have been dead, and therefore there could be no waste of time in their accepting this princely invitation even for a year, since all the time henceforth at their disposal was practically a loan from Heaven, so that when they met in the morning their minds were really made up. The captain and his wife were penniless and without prospects, for the firm he had sailed for had only that one ship, and he knew how fierce was the competition for a berth. The mate and the steward were both unmarried and friendless, as so many sailors are, and they were jubilant at the idea of having a yachting cruise like this; while as for Mr. Burney and Jemmy, the former felt that it was his duty to give Jemmy the best chance possible, and he was not at all sure that such another opportunity as this would ever come along again, while as for himself, he said wearily that it didn't matter very much what happened.

Next morning saw the parties assembled and ready for their visit to the yacht, Jemmy and the children

full of delight, as they were free from any care. The care of Mr. Smith had provided carriages, and all, feeling as if they were bound for a jolly picnic, left the hotel. When they reached the shore a pretty little steam-launch awaited them, manned by a crew in smart uniform, all of whom seemed thoroughly satisfied with their lot in life. They soon neared the *Samaritan*, a splendid barque-rigged vessel, with a squat yellow funnel and everything about her man-o'-war fashion, that is, as bright and smart as labour and brains could make it. They were received on board with all the deference due to distinguished visitors. But when they were invited to enter the saloon, William Fisher, the steward, hung back. Mr. Smith noticed at once that the party was one short, and upon inquiry found out that Fisher had scruples on board ship about making himself too free in the company of ladies and gentlemen. He was at once put at his ease by being consigned to the chief steward, and became happy directly.

Then the inspection of the vessel began—a delightful occupation, for they had all the keen perception of the sailor for a perfect ship, and their host knew how to value their appreciation. She was a darling, a craft to make a sailor's heart leap. Not only had she engines that could drive her fifteen miles an hour, but she had sails—a full suit of sails that, in the event of her wiggling propeller under the stern being carried away by any accident, would drive her at the rate

of at least ten knots, given enough wind. And she carried a crew of a hundred British seamen and firemen—splendid specimens of the race, all well fed, well paid, and well contented; and, as her owner said proudly, she cost far less than the upkeep of a stable for training racehorses and the subsequent villainy which always accompanies that most demoralising of all kinds of so-called sport. In all her appointments she was perfect as far as the verdict of the company assembled went, and she had in addition a very fine lot of big guns of the latest pattern, so that in time of war she might be of use to the country. The crew were housed as if they were men, not dogs or pigs, a berth for every two, and their food was served to them as it would be in a decent eating-house ashore, that is, with a table-cloth and all the things we look for on a decently laid table. Also there were plenty of books in a bookcase in the men's eating-room, not locked up in the cabin in charge of a grumpy steward who begrudged the time and trouble of giving a book out, although it was his duty.

But the best thing about the *Samaritan* after all was that every member of her crew, from the captain down to the smallest boy (there were six of these young seamen aboard), evidently looked upon Mr. Smith as their good friend, a man who had their true interests at heart, and whom they loved to serve. Yes, she was indeed a happy ship, and before the visitors had been aboard one hour they had

decided to accept their generous host's invitation and leave all care behind them for a few months. When therefore they had fully examined the beautiful vessel from stem to stern they returned to the saloon for refreshments, and there informed Mr. Smith that they gratefully accepted his offer. He bowed, and said that their decision had given him much pleasure (he looked it too), far more than would the prospect of the company of a lot of idlers, themselves rich, who just accepted invitations like his, because nothing better presented itself just then. And being a man of much energy himself, he suggested that as soon as they were rested they should return to shore, collect their belongings, complete their outfit, and be on board again that night, ready to sail in the morning. Their destination could be settled when they got to sea.

In all these arrangements Jemmy of course had no say; he was far too busy enjoying himself to care what was being done. In fact he had fallen back a bit from the good habit he had when we first knew him of thinking for himself. But we cannot blame him, especially as everything turned out so well, that it seemed to him as if he was always going to be looked after. But when the party was preparing to leave the ship he went and whispered to Mr. Burney, and then coming boldly up to Mr. Smith said, "If you please, sir, may I stay on board? I don't want to see any more of this nasty old place, and everything is so good here, I don't want to

go anywhere else." "Why, of course you can stay, my boy," said Mr. Smith. Then turning to Captain Wilson he said further, "Don't you think my little friends here may as well stay too?" Of course the captain and his wife were pleased to leave their dear ones in such a good place, and so it was settled; the party left for the shore, and the youngsters stayed behind.

I wish you could have seen them when once they were let loose. They were like young colts, only that they got into more mischief. They did a great many things that they should not, which anywhere else would no doubt have got them into serious trouble, but here, where everybody was full of kindness towards them, they only got a warning, which was a long way from a scolding even. But this unfortunately made them bolder and bolder, and at last Freda, in an attempt to outdo her brother's antics, climbed on to the rail and tried to run along it. She missed her footing and fell overboard. Quick as a cat Jemmy dived after her. He could swim very well, having learned in the rough waters of the Mersey, and from having to hold his own with a lot of rough boys was fairly well up in the business of life-saving, although he had never had any regular lessons. They both came to the surface together, he holding Freda by the shoulders and treading water. But he had not to hold her long, for her brother's shrieks brought a lot of men running to

the spot armed with all kinds of life-saving gear, and before Jemmy had really felt the importance of his action, both he and his little charge were hauled on board again. Freda was immediately bundled off to the stewardess to be cosseted and soothed into forgetfulness of her fall, while Jemmy was stripped and rigged out in a suit belonging to one of the ship's boys, besides being called all sorts of endearing names by the sailors, who love a smart boy.

When the party returned on board and heard the news, Jemmy was in great danger of being spoiled. The poor mother, full of gratitude, took him to her breast and gave him the first motherly kisses he ever remembered having. She would have held him longer, but Mr. Burney had told her husband that Jemmy had already received more attention than it was safe for any ordinary boy to get, and that it would be well to give him a chance to recover. So the father, full as his heart was of gratitude to Jemmy for saving his dear little girl, warned his wife, and she left Jemmy to Mr. Burney, who took the opportunity to deliver a lecture to Jemmy on behaviour. He gave the boy some sound advice as to how he should act under this surprising change in their condition, and wound up his remarks by saying, "Jemmy, my dear lad, you have seen already how full of surprises a sailor's life is. You have had the bitter, and now the sweets are here, but don't

forget that at any moment you may have to go back to trouble again. Therefore keep ready to face it whatever it is. Don't get a big head. Don't be saucy and stuck-up, but take advantage of every opportunity to learn, especially now when you've got such a chance as falls to the lot of very few boys in the world. I don't want to preach to you or hinder you from having a good time, but I do want you to become a man, and it would make me very unhappy if you were to disappoint me." For all the answer Jemmy squeezed his friend's hand and bolted off to his bunk, flung his clothes off, and in two minutes he was fast asleep.

When Jemmy awoke in the morning he knew at once that he was again at sea, and in almost feverish haste he washed, dressed, and bolted on deck, to find the beautiful craft under all sail standing off the land. The wonderful cleanliness and order everywhere appealed to him, young as he was. It was such a contrast to the Italian ship, and even the *Rosamund*, of which he still kept the most loving memories, seemed but a dingy craft as compared with this white-winged beauty. He was standing looking aloft at the snowy sails glistening in the brilliant sunshine, lost in wonder and admiration, when he felt a hand on his shoulder. Turning sharply, he saw Mr. Smith standing behind him smiling serenely. His hand went up in salute, and Mr. Smith, re-

turning it, said, "Jemmy, I've been thinking a lot about you. I have heard your story from Mr. Burney, and I want to help him to make a good man of you. But don't ever forget the little chaps that are left behind. If, as I hope, you ever come to be a prime seaman and command a big ship, don't be ashamed of the fact that you were once a lonely, helpless boy, and that it was only by a special Providence that you met a good, warm-hearted man who helped you all he knew, and who never forgets you even in the midst of his own big troubles, as Mr. Burney has. Now, I'm not going to spoil you; I'm going to treat you as one of the crew, and you'll have to go on learning all that can be taught you the same as the other boys on board, because there is no more useless creature under heaven than the boy or man who has nothing to do for himself, or anybody else, who always finds everything done for him. Come along, we'll find the boatswain."

So they went forward, Jemmy feeling a little bit troubled at the idea that his games with the children were put a stop to. Already he had forgotten that he must work, and that play was not the whole business of life. But, as we have seen, he had early learned to obey, and that good lesson stuck fast.

"Boatswain," said Mr. Smith, as a big burly man crossed the deck in front of them, "here's a

boy for you. I want you to take him in hand and see that he learns his duties. Make an able seaman of him. I don't think you'll have much trouble, for he has already had a pretty severe training."

"All right, sir," said the boatswain, "I'll put him through, and it shan't be my fault if he don't turn out all right."

"Now, Jemmy," said Mr. Smith, turning to the boy, "you are fairly launched. Don't think that you are in any disgrace, or that I have put you under the boatswain's charge because I want to get rid of you. As long as you are in my yacht you will always have my care and sympathy, and you'll be able to see as much of your dear friend Mr. Burney as is good for you. But you must not be allowed to lose the habit of work, which is the worst thing that can happen to any of us. Now go and take up your quarters with the other boys."

Now there is no doubt at all that, in spite of Mr. Smith's wise words, Jemmy *did* feel that he was under a cloud. He had in truth been a little bit spoilt, was getting puffed up at the thought of his many and extraordinary adventures in so short a time, and he had in a great measure forgotten that he had yet to learn how to earn his own living as well as to put that learning into practice. For all this we cannot blame him. Any boy, however good, would have felt the same. Still it was

with a somewhat heavy heart and a certain feeling of discontent that he made his way to the boys' quarters in order to take up his abode with them. They were all below when he got there, the six of them, and received him as I am sorry to say boys usually do receive a stranger in their midst, which is in much the same way as that in which a lot of fowls receive a strange hen put in amongst them—all have a peck at her, and be she as brave as she can possibly be, she is only one against numbers, and must sooner or later decline a fight because she is not able to keep up any longer. So Jemmy came diffidently into the house and said, "Can anybody tell me where my bunk is?" "Oh," sneered a red-headed, beefy youth, "here's the passenger. Got the chuck from the aristocratic party aft and condescends to come an' pig in with us. Good morning, your Royal Highness. Where's your valley? 'low me to assist yer an' put yer wardrobe away." So saying, the boy snatched Jemmy's bag from his arms and flung it into a corner, following up this attack by knocking his cap off with a violence that sent him reeling.

Now I should like to say that Jemmy recovered himself instantly, and springing at his tormentor gave him as good a thrashing as ever a boy had, curing him effectually of such behaviour in the future. But unfortunately I cannot. Jemmy's pluck was not of that kind, and, besides, all his treatment lately had been of such a nature that he

was totally unprepared for this. So, bewildered, he went after his cap, and shrinking into a corner waited for what would happen next. Everything that did happen was very bad for Jemmy, although it was only what usually does happen at our big public schools and such places where boys and young men begin life. Ragging, hazing, freeing, whatever it is called, is so bad, that those indulging in it are nothing but cowardly bullies, who should be flogged within an inch of their lives. The harm that it does the newcomers cannot be counted. It is a lesson of the most severe kind, and one never forgotten, that might is right, that there is no such thing as fair play, and that all the splendid lessons of manliness joined to goodness which are taught in the Bible are false. Fancy boys making one of a dozen other boys to shamefully ill-use a newcomer, strange and timid as he must be, not because you don't like him, or because he is no good, but for the mere desire for cruelty. There are no words in our language strong enough to condemn such behaviour.

By this you will have imagined that Jemmy was in for a rotten time, and so indeed he was. Those six young rascals made him wish that he had never been born. And when he started crying they were delighted. It was the finest fun. But a strange thing happened then. Seeing that they were so pleased at his tears, Jemmy had a strange feeling come over him, a feeling that, do what they would,

he would die before they should see another wet drop on his face. So although they tore all his clothes off, pinched and beat him black and blue, burnt him with matches, and did other shameful things that I can't repeat, they were not able to wring from him one cry or one tear. And in the midst of their devilish delight the door burst open and Mr. Smith entered. It was quite usual, as he made it his business to keep himself always acquainted with what was going on all over his ship and so prevent injustice. It was a curious scene that he saw. Six boys in various parts of the house flushed and sweating with their exertions and laughter, and one little white, naked figure lying in a corner just quivering. "What does this mean?" he asked, and his voice was stern and menacing. There was no answer, for dry tongues clung to parched mouths, and refused to utter words for veriest fear. As I said, bullies are always cowards. Mr. Smith went over to where Jemmy lay, picked him up pitifully, and looked at him. Something bright sparkled in the good man's eyes as he saw the state of that poor boy's body, and he had to exercise a tremendous restraint upon his feelings to keep him from doing something terrible to those boys who had done this thing.

For a few minutes he said nothing; then he gave the order, "Call the boatswain here." The six delinquents fell over one another in their haste to obey, but he roared, "Only one. The rest of you

stay here, and the one that goes come back with the boatswain." Another pause, and the boatswain appeared with the boy messenger. "Boatswain," said Mr. Smith sternly, "you see this lad. I sent him here to join the boys' mess, and in an hour this is what they have done to him. What shall I do with them?" "Serve 'em the same, sir," replied the boatswain. "I suppose they was copyin' the behaviour of the galliant young ofrcers in the army, an' thinks it's proper to very near kill a pore chap on joining. No wonder sojer ofrcers is such a lot of duffers if that's how they begin." "Very well, boatswain," answered Mr. Smith. "I leave it to you to give each of these scoundrels such a rope's-ending as he'll remember all his life. You needn't be afraid of doing any injustice, for I caught them in the very act, the cowardly brutes." Oh, then you should have heard the pleading and crying to get off from the due and deserved rewards of their deeds—quite according to rule of course, since you never find those who delight in inflicting pain upon others at all anxious to receive it themselves. But the boatswain, taking an active interest in their matter of reward, was not in the least affected by their howls, and even had he been, the sight of Jemmy's naked body, all bruises and scratches, would have been enough, quite enough, to make him keep justice before mercy. So we will draw a veil over the painful scene that ensued, and return to

Jemmy, who, I am glad to say, refused to give any information as to the combined assault made on him, only he assured Mr. Smith that he had not knowingly given any cause for it, and hoped that his berth-mates would allow him to live with them in peace.

“I hope they will,” said Mr. Smith rather grimly, “for their own sakes. But get a bath, and I’ll send a doctor to you with something for your bruises. Then turn in and have a sleep; it will be better for you than going into hospital and being made a fuss of, for which there is really no need.” And the owner walked out, muttering to himself and showing more signs of anger than anybody on board had ever seen him do before. He had only just gone when one by one the boys, smarting most painfully, returned from their interview with the boatswain. But none of them mentioned the matter. Doubtless it was very near to all their thoughts, and very likely they did not feel at all kindly towards their new shipmate, but at any rate, however vigorously their thinking gear was working, they preserved a discreet silence. And when the doctor came with his arnica and ointment they manifested no interest in what he was doing, but made haste to return to the deck and leave Jemmy alone. He was soon made comfortable, and, obeying his orders, climbed into the bunk which had been allotted to him, and went at once to sleep.

Meanwhile the lovely craft under all plain sail but no steam was bowling merrily along at about eight knots an hour with the aid of a strong south-east trade wind, which, hanging well to the eastward, enabled her to lay her course southward with ease. That morning Mr. Smith had held a consultation with the grateful passengers, and it had been decided that for the present at any rate they would steer for the Cape of Good Hope in leisurely fashion and gradually work their way round the world, calling at such interesting ports as might seem desirable, or touching at lonely, out-of-the-way spots in the vast ocean. But all should be subject to change without notice, and it must distinctly be understood that being the owner's guests the passengers were not to concern themselves with money matters at all. If any of them needed cash for pocket-money at any time, they were to apply to the purser, who would see that they were supplied. "And now," said the owner, "just go ahead and enjoy yourselves, and the happier you are, the happier you'll make me. Excuse me, please, I have some business to attend to in my office," and he was gone to escape the inevitable thanks.

Thus delightfully began the cruise of the *Samaritan* for the lately distressed British seamen, who could hardly believe that what was now happening was real, and felt inclined to rub their eyes and wonder if they were awake, as they looked

upon their surroundings, the realisation of the dream that every good sailor has—the dream of a perfectly beautiful ship with sails and steam and a splendid crew, and to crown all, unlimited money for necessary expenses which has not to be screwed out of hard, business-like, unsympathetic owners, who, having their living to get, closely examine every item. Is it any wonder that they dropped into easy-chairs and gave themselves up to the soft, delightful enchantment of the hour, asking themselves how they could ever have felt that they hated the sea and longed to retire to some tiny inland village where they never again would hear its wonderful voice. Very happy and perfectly peaceful were the seven days succeeding, for the strange man that owned this beautiful ship appeared to be continually trying to find new ways of giving those on board an interest in life. While the work of the ship was carried on under a system of discipline as stern as that on board of any man-of-war, a certain portion of each day was set apart for instruction about the sea in all its various aspects, and no member of the crew was neglected in this scheme of pleasantly sharing knowledge. Every one was encouraged to ask for information concerning anything that occurred to him, and was made to feel that no matter what his position on board might be, his inquiries would receive equal attention. There was no regular school on board, but every one was made to feel that if they wanted

to learn, they could in the pleasantest and most complete manner combine theory with practice. As for the work of the ship, that was carried on in such a thorough fashion that no man on board, or boy either, could help being a better seaman for his share in the duties of the vessel. And as a result everybody was happy.

But I hear some dear boy asking, "Didn't they have any games?" Well, I can understand the question, but do you think that such a man as I hope you have already felt Mr. Smith to be could neglect so important a matter as play? Indeed they did, and if they were not able to go in for footer and cricket, as the boys who have a big field to play in do, what they lacked in space they made up in energy, and in swimming they had advantages such as no boys in a school can enjoy, for they had the splendid ocean to bathe in, with wide nettings spread for the timid, while the bolder swimmers and divers were free to plunge wherever they would, knowing that their noise would be sufficient to keep any sharks at a very respectful distance, however hungry they might be. And as for gymnastics—well, there are few places where they can be learned better than they are on board ship, and consequently the crew of the *Samaritan* enjoyed that important branch of athletic sports to the full.

On Sunday, after the decks were swept up and wetted, a job which never took more than half-an-

hour, from six in the morning till half-past, nothing was done in the nature of work or play, but everybody was expected to come to the service held on the quarter-deck for an hour to join in a recognition of the care of the Creator. A full muster of all hands not actually engaged in the necessary handling of the ship was insisted upon, every man clean and in his best rig, to do honour to the beneficent day of rest. At that meeting Mr. Smith took his place as the patriarch of this large family, all of whom were dependent upon his good-will in thus spending his money in a truly sensible way. In a spirit of true religion he then endeavoured to show how good God had been to them all. His words were few and humble, and no attempt was ever made by him to attract their attention to himself, but every man and boy was invited to feel how before God all were equal, and all were responsible to one another for the right use of the opportunities they had of making the best of life.

After the short service every one's time was his own, and in their pleasant quarters men could read and smoke, and chat and lounge as they felt inclined, making it a day of real rest and enjoyment.

CHAPTER VI

BESIDES being, as we have seen, a generous man of practical views, Mr. Smith was a fervent lover of the sea, and that, too, apart from its value to us Britons as being our natural highway all over the world. He loved it for its beauty and its mystery, its incessant change and yet its constancy to its great duties. And he was never tired of pointing out to his men or his guests the endless succession of interesting things to be seen by those with eyes for ocean wonders. And so it came about that their progress eastward was but slow, for if anything curious demanded attention or was worth investigating the vessel was stopped, a boat was lowered, and everybody on board had a fine time. For really, although I have never seen it so stated before, the great drawbacks to perfect enjoyment of a sea voyage is that there are so many very interesting things to be seen that have to be hurried by on account of there being no time to spare, which is a great pity, but of course cannot be helped. Now on my whaling cruise, hard as the life was, I enjoyed myself more than I have ever done before or since, because there were so many opportunities given us of going away in boats and

looking into things, exploring little uninhabited islands, &c. Nearly all I have been able to learn of the ways of the sea creatures and of the sea itself I learned on that voyage, almost entirely because we were never in a hurry except when after whales.

And so the leisurely progress eastward of the *Samaritan* was full of interest to all on board, for there was no one in a hurry to get to port. Given a comfortable ship, what happier life could a sailor wish for than this? It was almost ideal. And Jemmy found it so after his messmates had discovered that he was not half a bad fellow, and that they could not blame him but only themselves for the serious trouble they got into shortly after his arrival among them. He joined with them readily enough in their larks, and got into scrapes like the rest of them. But I am glad to say that none of these scrapes were of a bad character, which was principally due to the fact that Mr. Burney spent much of his time among the boys, yarning to them out of his long experience and using his opportunities of teaching them, so that all unconsciously they were being fitted for their business as sailors in the best possible way.

They had no adventures worth recording on their passage to the Cape, although a complete account of all that they saw and investigated in that short time would fill a big book, so full of interest is the life of the ocean. But in spite of the interesting times,

I think all hands were really delighted when the look-out man one morning sang out "Land ho," having seen from the fore-yard the wonderful flat-topped Table Mountain on whose flanks rests Cape Town. They ran in past Robben Island, the beautifully situated asylum of the poor lepers from the adjacent land, and entered the docks side by side with splendid Union Castle liners and a dozen other big steamships all competing for the trade of this great British Colony. No sooner was the vessel secured in her berth than Mr. Smith issued an order that as soon as the decks were cleared up and the ship made trim, all hands should be at liberty for the rest of the day to do as they pleased, and that the purser would advance money to all who needed it on account of their wages. Jemmy of course, boy-like, was eager to get ashore, and the more so because his new chums were all agog to get away from the ship also, promising themselves no end of a game when they were once clear of the vessel. And so it came about that instead of Jemmy choosing the wise part of asking his old friend's advice, he slipped ashore with three other boys, feeling guilty, as he really was, of having acted shabbily.

Now I don't know why boys should act so stupidly or feel that it is manly to behave as they see very silly men doing, but these young rascals were no sooner clear of the docks than they must needs make for a public-house and order drink

as if they were tipplers. I need scarcely say that the drink was bad, for it would, let its quality be ever so high, have been bad for the clean-living boys, but being vile, as it was, it nearly poisoned them, and so they were quite unfit to take care of themselves after they had taken the first drink and got out into the street again. But as usual, having taken the first downward step they felt impelled to rush to the bottom, and so they had more and more, until all the subsequent proceedings were to them but a horrible, painful medley of noise and struggle. And they awoke next morning, the four of them, in a filthy lock-up, nearly naked, covered with dirt and bruises, and their heads aching so badly that they felt fit to go mad. Also there was that sickening sense of shame and coming trouble that always follows upon wrongdoing until the sufferer almost wishes he was dead. What had really happened to them they never knew, or where they had been, only they were certain that they had been robbed and ill-treated, and that it was entirely their own fault.

Meanwhile Mr. Burney, in great distress of mind, had been prowling about looking for Jemmy; really he did not care much about the other fellows, rather unjustly blaming them for leading Jemmy astray. And he it was who first discovered them. He paid the small fine imposed upon them, and brought them down to the ship without saying a word of blame. Jemmy could not look at him, and wished

with all his heart that the sad-faced man would scold him—he felt that he would be easier after it. But no, Mr. Burney felt too deeply grieved to try and by mere words convey his ideas of the boys' misbehaviour to them. So he brought them to the ship, and Mr. Smith stood at the gangway as they came aboard.

As the four miserable lads came up to him he said quietly, "What has happened to you?" There was a dead silence for nearly a minute, and then the biggest, George Wilson, saluted and replied, "Please, sir, we went and bought some drink, and it made us drunk, and we don't remember any more until we found ourselves locked up, sir." "Very well," said their employer, "I think you have been sufficiently punished, but you mustn't go ashore again here. Now go below and wash and dress."

The poor culprits gratefully disappeared, having learned an invaluable lesson, or, rather, a course of lessons, at their age, principal among which were distrust of their own wisdom, and the curious fact that wrong-doing always brings its own punishment on its back. Perhaps Jemmy found his disgrace hardest to bear, because he had naturally from his late treatment grown to regard himself as a cut above the ordinary boy. And now he had to meet the sorrowful eyes of his friend, whose glance cut much deeper than his words would have done had he spoken any. But their attentions

were soon to be diverted to much more serious matters.

Whether it was the exceedingly carefully considered life they had led in the *Samaritan*, joined to the good food, that made her sailors and firemen run riot when they got ashore, I don't know, but I have to record with much sorrow that instead of coming on board that morning from their leave sober and ready to resume work, they made their appearance at various times throughout the day, dirty, degraded, and quarrelsome. So much so, that it was all the petty officers could do to confine them and their rioting to the fore end of the ship where they belonged. But it was not until dark that the last of them rolled on board, carrying more liquor, and ready, as one of them put it, for anything from pitch and toss to manslaughter. And as it got later so the conduct became worse, until at about nine o'clock the lower deck forward where they lived was a scene of terrible riot. The men got quite unmanageable, and yet it seemed certain that if something were not done soon to control them there would be murder.

Now Mr. Smith was a very brave man, and had besides great confidence in his ability to bring the men whom he had treated so well to hear reason. But he had no force at his back, and unfortunately we know very well that with most men force is the only argument they will attend to, and that because they must. When the uproar was at its

height, and the officers had tried all their powers of persuasion and threats in vain, Mr. Smith went forward alone in the tumult. At the time there were several fights going on, and much blood had already been shed, but no serious wounds had been inflicted. And so crazy were the men that they did not recognise their benefactor, although his voice rose trumpet-toned above the riot. Then came the tragedy. Two Irishmen were fighting savagely with "heavers," oaken bludgeons that are used in sailorising, but make most formidable weapons. Mr. Smith sprang in between them, clutching at the breasts of both, and received almost at the same moment two blows, one upon his face and the other on the back of his bald head. He dropped like a pole-axed bullock, and his two assailants grappled one another over his fallen body like tigers thirsting for blood. But his fall caused such a sensation among the other men that they came rushing to the rescue and dragged his limp body from under the trampling feet.

The uproar ceased; men who a few moments before had been flying at one another's throats in sheer wantonness now stood sober and amazed, or slunk away into corners and sat with heads bowed, wondering what they had done, and why they had done it. But the awful words "too late" were written across their vows of repentance, for the best employer that ever seamen had never recovered consciousness. He lingered until four o'clock in

the morning, and then passed quietly away. That one drunken act had slain one of the best of men, and had at the same time deprived everybody on board of their employment, a service too which was the pleasantest any of them had ever enjoyed.

When the sad news was circulated, men stared at each other blankly, uncomprehendingly, as if suddenly stricken silly. Then their benumbed senses returned to them, and they were suddenly filled with furious rage against those fools who had done this thing, forgetting that they were all alike guilty, seeing that none of them knew whose hands had actually dealt the blows. They raved and swore at one another and themselves fruitlessly, and exhausted language in stupid sayings of what they would do to the murderers if they could but lay hands on them. Then they grew quieter, and recalled the many virtues of their late employer, his single-eyed desire to do them all good and make them happy. This of course was equally useless as their former mood, but not equally dangerous, and they had become really penitent when the summons came for all hands to lay aft. They went immediately and listened while the purser informed them that he had received a cablegram from London; the late owner's solicitors had instructed him to pay off all the crew at once, lay the vessel up, and await further instructions.

So the expected blow fell, not less heavily because expected, and equally hard upon innocent and

guilty, for the passengers brought from Rio were now in evil case. It was entirely unlikely that Captain Wilson would in Cape Town be able to obtain command at all, much less a command where he might take his wife and two children to sea with him. As for Mr. Burney, his case was not so bad, because with a chief mate's certificate in a busy port like Cape Town a man can hardly go very long without employment. And Jemmy. Well, he was of very little consequence to anybody, however important he may be to us. And he was not much troubled either. He was certainly very grieved, in a dim, indefinite sort of way, at the death of Mr. Smith, and felt that he would have done anything he could to save so good a man, but it would have been wrong to expect so young a lad to feel anything very deeply. That comes after, when these early happenings are recalled.

Well, the crew were paid off, and the passengers were given a really handsome present, at the purser's risk, as he said, and away they all went, leaving the beautiful *Samaritan* laid up, hopelessly as it seemed, for it was just after the war, and money was very scarce.

Mr. Burney got the offer of a ship as chief mate the very next day, but although he did his best to get Jemmy with him, he could not; the skipper wouldn't have him. And so for the present he drops out of the story as sailors do, you know.

It is not one of the least hardships of sea-life that you make a dear friend, and then at a moment's notice you may have to separate from him, and although your heart may burn with desire to see him once more, you shall meet in out-of-the-way ports all over the world all the casual acquaintances you have made but him, the other half of your soul you shall never see again. What Mr. Burney felt at this separation I cannot tell you, for he was one of those men who do not say much, but let their feelings gnaw silently at their hearts. Jemmy of course wept, shed many tears, as a warm-hearted boy should, and then as any boy would in the midst of all the extraordinary things going on around him, forgot how sorry he was.

Captain Wilson and his wife did not forget him though. Indeed Mrs. Wilson felt that but for him she would have lost her darling Freda, and both she and her husband in the midst of their own great troubles spared a portion of their anxieties for Jemmy and his future. In fact, it may reasonably be said that they thought more of him than he did of himself. They had a cheap lodging—cheap, that is, for Cape Town, for their stock of money was very small, and their chance of getting employment scanty—and they invited Jemmy to share it with them. He, like an honest little chap, offered to hand over all his stock of money, amounting to about three pounds, to them to lay out for him, but although Mrs. Wilson took care of it for him,

I believe she would have starved rather than touch a penny.

A weary time of waiting for the Wilsons followed. All the rest of their late shipmates, the seamen and the firemen of the *Samaritan*, and even the steward Fisher, had found ships, and departed in various directions over the seven seas. Only this little family was left, and for them matters began to look very black. Jemmy now did a very foolish thing, with the best intentions of course. He had long felt that he ought not to be a burden upon the Wilsons, and perhaps there may have been, I cannot tell, a little sense of loss of liberty. Like any boy with his experiences, he felt that he was independent, able to look after himself, and unwilling to be under anybody's control if he could help it. It was the old Arab spirit breaking out. So carefully concealing his intention from his friends, he got all his outfit collected in one bag ready to take away at the first opportunity. He had been hanging about the docks for many days, making all sorts of acquaintances, useful and otherwise, and at last he stumbled across a man who seemed as if he had stepped right out of a sea-novel. He was not very tall, but very square, with rounded shoulders, and legs that, when he planted them on deck, seemed as if his feet, like those of the flies, stuck where they were placed and would hold his body, no matter how much the ship rolled, firmly erect. His face, neck, and breast were burnt brick red by sun and

wind. His hair and beard were black and curly, but cropped very close; his eyes were deep set, and as bright as diamonds; and his voice had a ring in it like the sound of eight bells to a man about to be relieved. Never mind about his clothes, they don't matter; and anyhow, he wore for his work whatever he could get that did not hamper his movements, only he never buttoned the front of his shirt, and could not bear his shirt sleeves to come below his elbows. His name was Jack Bunce, and he was mate of a schooner, the *Ione*, whose duty was to run down from Cape Town to Tristan d'Acunha occasionally with stores for the islanders and put in a little time at Nightingale and Gough Islands, getting as many sea-elephants as would make the expenses of the voyage.

To Jemmy, sitting open-mouthed listening to Jack Bunce's descriptions of those lonely islands and the hairbreadth escapes of landing and seal catching, it seemed as if to get away on that wonderful voyage in the pretty schooner would be the height of bliss, while to share in those wonderful experiences of which Jack spoke so carelessly would, he felt, be the height of his ambition. Consequently when one day Jack said casually that he thought they needed a boy to make himself generally useful on board, Jemmy said almost breathlessly, "D'you think, sir, that I should stand any chance with the captain? Oh, if you'd only speak for me, I should be so glad. I *would* like to go with you."

Jack looked down at the eager face complacently and replied, "Oh, I think you can come along if you want to. What I say to the captain in the matter of shipping hands is enough to satisfy him. If you really want to go, I can ship you now. But we can't give you more than a pound a month, and you'll have to work for that now, I tell you." Jimmy jumped up from the bucket he had been sitting on and blurted out his thanks, and expressed his willingness to go at once and sign the articles. In half-an-hour he was enrolled as one of the crew of the *Ione* at a pound a month, and in a whirl of conflicting feelings he made his way to his lodgings. He found his good friends absent and considered himself lucky, for he was able to take away his small belongings without their knowing anything about his doing so.

Having put his "dunnage," as sailors call their traps, on board he went home to tea, for, as he felt, the last time, and then as he noted afresh the kindly consideration for him shown by his two good friends, he could not help feeling guilty, although he kept saying to himself that he had done right in getting a ship. But for all that a nasty lump would keep rising in his throat every time he tried to tell them what he had done, and especially when he talked to his two little chums, Freda and Eddie. He felt he could not tell his story before them, and so he waited until they had gone to bed. Then with a

desperate rush into the heart of his subject he said, "Captain Wilson, I've been and got a ship. An' I'm sailing the day after to-morrow." There, it was out now, and he felt relieved, but there was an awkward silence for the next minute. Then Mrs. Wilson said, "Oh, you poor little chap, fancy you going and doing a thing like that without telling us. We did want to keep you with us." And she began to cry, for she loved the boy. But the captain looked kindly at the boy as he said, "Ah, Jemmy, I admire your pluck, but you should have asked my advice before fixing yourself. I could have helped you perhaps. Never mind, tell us all about it; perhaps it is not too late to help you a bit now."

So Jemmy sat down and told them, while Mrs. Wilson bemoaned his haste, saying how much she feared she had lost Jemmy altogether now, and her husband, secretly admiring the boy's independent spirit, felt sorely grieved that he should have gone into such a byway of seafaring as that, which apparently led nowhere. However, the thing was done, and besides it was evident that Jemmy was fully satisfied and eager to be gone, so what was the good of talking. But they insisted upon seeing Jemmy off, and with that poor little consolation for his loss they separated from him for the night.

Next day they made much of him, laying out his scanty stock of money in just those things that Captain Wilson knew he would be likely to need

in such a hard and stormy trade. And when the day was done Jemmy felt richer than he had ever been before in his life, felt equipped for a voyage to the uttermost ends of the earth. But when at the close of their shopping Captain Wilson received a message informing him that he had been chosen to take the *Samaritan* back to England, Jemmy felt that perhaps he had been a little too sudden in his choice of a ship. He was not going to show the white feather though, and lest his resolution should weaken to the extent of showing that he repented of his haste, he said good-bye that night and went down on board of the schooner ready to sail at noon the next day. When he crept into the grimy, stuffy foc's'le with its terribly sickening smell of rotting skins and stale oil, it is not to be denied that before he fell asleep his heart became very sad as he thought of the beautiful *Samaritan* with her roomy cleanliness. But Jemmy possessed one quality which I feel sure is one of the most valuable that any of us can have—it was that of never fretting over what was past and done with, or wasting precious hours in thinking how different things might have been. And presently he dropped off into the sweet, dreamless sleep of tired boyhood.

It was still dark below when he was aroused by the bull-like roar of his new chief, Mr. Bunce, as he was careful to call him, who shouted down into the den, "Now then, Jemmy my son, rouse an' bitt, all hands on deck." Jemmy tumbled out,

and snatching his cap (for he had turned in "all standing," as sailors say, meaning without undressing), he stumbled blindly up the little ladder into the bright sunshine and stood blinking at the mate like an owl, for he was only half-awake. The burly mate burst into a loud laugh as he surveyed the youngster, and he said jovially, "Why, sonny, that's great. Anybody'd think you'd been raised in American packet ships or on board of Andrew (men-of-war) the way you turn out. Keep on like that and you won't go far wrong. I can do with any kind of boy or man but a skulker. But come along and git some coffee, an' then we'll turn to. You an' me an' the cook is all hands for the present."

Mechanically Jemmy uttered the regular "Aye, aye, sir," and in a minute or two was enjoying a pannikin of scalding black coffee and a hunk of bread and butter as if it was the first meal he had found for many a day. But the mate's strong jaws wagged faster than his, so that before he was half finished his new officer was poisoning the sweet morning air with the smoke from a pipe that looked as if it had been in use for a generation. "Don't hurry, Jemmy," said the mate; "I shall take full five minutes over my smoke, and then we'll see what you're made of." The five minutes passed. Jemmy wiped his mouth on the back of his hand, and picking up his own and the mate's pannikin, returned them to the galley. Then facing the mate he stood expectant, ready to be proved.

The next two hours passed like ten minutes, they were so full of work. I would like to describe them to you, but unfortunately in talking about ship-work the details are so technical that any truthful account would read to you like a foreign language, and not only so, but if you have been in the habit of reading sea-stories it would sound so different as to appear all wrong, for there would be no "splicing the mainbrace," or "shivering of timbers," or "avast there, my hearties." But be very sure that the work done by the mate and Jemmy was real sailor work, and of so hard a kind, involving very much scrambling aloft and rushing, that interested as Jemmy was he was exceedingly glad when the mate said, "There, Mister Boy, I think we'll say spell—oh! for a little while, while I get a smoke and you get your breath. Besides, we don't want to do all the work before those scalawags come aboard." Jemmy answered with much alacrity, "Aye, aye, sir," and plumped down on the corner of the main hatch, his eyes fixed upon the mate, who was methodically slicing up tobacco from a big black plug in a manner peculiar to sailors. When he (the mate) had completed his slicing he cocked his knife in the fork of his right thumb, and putting the plug in his pocket, slowly rubbed up the slices in the palm of his left hand before cramming the thus finely shredded tobacco into his black old pipe. Jemmy watched him with that same attentive curiosity that every useful boy

shows towards each action performed around him, wondering very much at the same time why anybody should go to so much trouble to prepare a nasty dose of smoke for themselves, by which you will understand that our hero had not yet learned to smoke, and as yet felt no inclination to do so.

For a little while the mate, having lighted his pipe, smoked in silence with evident enjoyment, but after puffing out many thick clouds of highly flavoured smoke, he paused, spat, and said, "Jemmy, it's likely we'll have some sealing before we get back. Did ye ever hear about what sort of a game it was?" "No, sir," answered Jemmy, "but I'd like to." "I thought ye would," muttered the mate, adding in an undertone to himself, "poor little beggar." Then he went on, "Well, I don't know as I can tell you very much about it, except that it means cold, and wet, and hunger, and the hardest of hard work all linked together. And unfortunately there is very little money in it for the workers either. But there, I don't suppose the money side of things has begun to trouble you yet. Hallo! Here comes the crowd, and a hard-looking lot of citizens they are. Five of 'em. Well, I must prepare for their reception agens the old man comes aboard." So saying, he stalked across to the gangway and stood lolling over the bulwarks with an air of great indifference.

CHAPTER VII

As the mate said, the five men now approaching were a pretty rough-looking lot, but it is always risky to go by appearances. At any rate as they came over the gangway they looked curiously at the mate, who did not apparently take any notice of them at all until the last one was on board. Then he turned and said crisply, "I suppose you're the crew, and if you are, I'm the mate." That broke the ice of their restraint, and they said in chorus, "Yes, sir." "All right," said the mate; "my name's Bunce, and for form's sake you'd better put the Mister to it. I dessay we shall go along all right if you fellows ain't afraid of hard work. I'll say that for you, you look as if you hadn't been used to very much ease. You'd better go forrard and settle yourselves? Cook'll have dinner for you in half-an-hour, an' at three bells (1.30) we'll begin to get under weigh." "Aye, aye, sir," chimed the crowd, and away they went, followed by Jemmy, to whom the mate had made a sign that he had better go and get acquainted with them at once. Somehow, he didn't quite understand why, he seemed to feel on speaking terms with them all at once, for although so rough looking, they had

not that sneaky, blackguardly look that any healthy-minded boy instinctively recoils from. And when the biggest of them slapped him on the back familiarly saying, "Well, Bill Spriggins, are you the second mate an' engineer of this packet?" Jemmy felt quite bold and big. So he responded, "No, Mr. Sailor, nor my name ain't Bill Spriggins; it's Jemmy, an' I've got t' see if there's anything I can do for you down below."

A loud laugh from all of them was the reply to this candid offer of service, and one by one they crawled down the ladder into the darksome triangular den set apart for their lodging place. Once there the usual sarcastic remarks about the splendour of their new home were passed, and one man having produced a candle-end from his pocket announced himself as the Gas Company who would presently call for the rates and cut off the glim if they weren't forthcoming. Truly it was a position that called for good temper and fairly high spirits on the part of newly joining men, so foul-smelling and dark and cramped were those quarters. But, happily, every man present seemed to be determined to make the most of things, and so, long before half-an-hour had passed, which the mate had told them would elapse before dinner was ready, they had all become fairly well acquainted with one another, even to the extent of getting the hang of each other's names. But they all seemed to take some pleasure in petting Jemmy

and asking him such questions as made him feel important. And before the cook had shouted "dinner" the boy had become well acquainted with all of them—Jacob, the foremost and biggest, an Englishman; Thomas, a red Welshman; Olaf, an almost white-headed but quite young Norwegian; Hans, a Rotterdam Dutchman; and Scotty, a square, sententious Aberdonian. These were all the names they gave to each other, and although they had others, it was very doubtful if they would have answered to them if they had been called, but simply because they were quite unused to hearing them spoken.

They dined in great content, and their remarks about their surroundings and the prospects of their new voyage were so funny, that Jemmy laughed till his sides ached again; he felt that he had never known what real laughter was until now. And the more the boy laughed, the more funny and good-humoured they all became, and the fun and jollity was at its height when the dread call came from above, "Turn to!" Each man grabbed his cap and blundered up the ladder, where the mate and a newcomer, the second mate, a misshapen, hairy, savage-looking man, were awaiting them. No time was lost, for the wind was fair for the eastward, so the orders flew fast. Ropes and chains were cast off, a little tug hooked on to the schooner, and away she went out of dock, slipping the tug as soon as she was through the dock gates

and spreading every inch of sail to the fine fair wind. Jemmy was very busy of course, but when the vessel was fairly under way and all the sails set, he was coiling ropes up aft and a strange man spoke to him, a man whom he had never seen before, but one who he felt instinctively was some one in authority. In a voice which sounded as if it came from between two feather beds the stranger said, "Boy, what's yer name?" "James Baker, sir," answered Jemmy respectfully. "Oh," said the strange man, "it is, is it? An' what ye doin' here, hey?" but at the last word the schooner dancing over a wave crest slid him off his feet and he fell heavily on his side. Jemmy sprang to help him up, and was tugging at him when the mate appeared, and brushing Jemmy away as if he were a fly, said to the fallen man, "Hallo, full already. Thought you was going to swear off the liquor this time for good, but I see I was wrong. Sure's you live you'll be overdoin' on't one o' these days, and then what'll become of you? Why, you'll get sand-bagged, knocked silly, robbed, and dumped overboard. Come on, let's get ye below; you're only hindering me here." And at the word the mate lugged the brutalised man off along the deck as if he had been a sack of potatoes, and with very little more care tumbled him down the companion way, confident apparently in the old belief that there is a special Providence that watches over a drunken man.

Presently he reappeared, red in the face and angry, and for the next hour or so matters flew forward in preparation, and a proof was offered, if any was needed, that the *Ione* had a perfectly efficient crew that might be depended upon to do their bit, no matter what it might be. The wind was rising steadily, and the great seas rolled up from the southward in mighty masses, but the smart little craft with the wind on her beam and carrying all sail reached swiftly off the land at a great rate, dancing now on a wave crest and now in the valley between two seas, as if full of the delight of service. Gradually the high land of Africa faded away into the indefinite blue haze, outline after outline becoming merged into one another, until only a blue-black shadow, like a vast cloud lowering on the horizon, remained to mark the visible position of the South African Continent.

Presently the mate's brow, which had been gradually clearing as the work progressed, brightened as if a gleam of sunshine had passed over it, and he said cheerily, "That'll do, boys, she's snug enough now; get below and have a smoke before tea. But wait a minute, let's pick for watches. There, Handasyde (to the second mate), come on, you can have the first pick." The savage-looking second growled an assent, and stepping forward said, "Here, you square-head, what's *your* tally?" "Olaf," quietly replied the Norwegian, "undt my

hedt ain't no more square as yours, see!" "Shut your head, you Dutch animal, or I shall be all over you in once." There were ominous murmurs from the crew and a disposition to close up and come forward, but the mate turning quietly to his subordinate said, "If that sort of thing is necessary, all well and good, we'll have it, but so far I see no signs of it being wanted. Anyhow, this is no packet ship, nor if I'm any judge of men are these fellows any packet rats. Now then, men, let the matter rest, we shall get along all right. I'll take Jacob." The second mate called Scotty, and that left Thomas and Hans to the mate. But then a difficulty arose, unforeseen by the mate. Having three men to the second mate's two he could not claim Jemmy as well, but etiquette forbade him giving up one of his men to the second. So, however reluctantly, he had to hand over Jemmy to a man who seemed as if he was just as ugly in temper as he was in face and body, and poor Jemmy stood speechless, gazing upon his officer with looks of horror.

In all his vicissitudes so far Jemmy, had been most fortunate in the men who had control of him; now, he felt, that good time was over. But when the second mate, or bosun as we will henceforth call him, said in his raven tones, "Now then, boy, get a bucket of water and go and swab my cabin out," he jumped as a high-mettled horse will if suddenly stung by the whip-lash. The mate looked

on with a curious expression upon his rugged features which Jemmy did not notice, and then turned away with a half sigh to seek solace in his beloved pipe. The men retired to their den to have their smoke and discuss the bosun, Olaf being especially sore. "If he makes trouble mit me I don't mindt making trouble mit him, but if he lets me alone ve keds along all right." And those words were wise, conveying the general sense of the little community as regarded the behaviour of their officers.

But alas for Jemmy, he seemed in a fair way to be ruined. Hitherto he had done what he had been told with the full consciousness that if he made a mistake it would be kindly remembered that the young and inexperienced lad was trying to do his best and was rapidly learning, consequently his improvement was fast, his face was bright, and his life was happy. Now, however, he did everything in fear and trembling, so afraid of making a mistake, that mistakes were the regular thing. With the bosun's eye on him he could do nothing right, he forgot all that he had ever learned. And every now and then he felt that horny hand gripping him by the ear and bringing his head up against a partition for some slight error which he never would have made if left to himself. Somehow he knew that if he complained to the mate things might have been altered, but he dared not. He suffered in silence, and became most miserable.

We must, however, for a moment return to a

gentleman whom we have forgotten most culpably, the commander and part owner of the *Iona*. In truth he may well have been neglected, for, as far as he was concerned, the events going on around him did not matter in the least. He was entirely unconscious of anything that happened until the second day out, when the cook, coming in to his little den to see how he was faring, saw him sitting up and staring at the bulkhead. "D'you feel like a little coffee, sir?" said the cook. But the parched lips refused to answer, and, somewhat alarmed, the cook went on deck and found the mate, telling him that the "old man" was awake at last. Mr. Bunce descended and greeted his superior with a grunted good-morning, and hoped that he felt better. The skipper made a motion indicating his thirst, and the mate, feeling sympathetic, found the suffering drunkard a drink, which almost hissed as it went down, so parched and burned was the ill-used throat. When the skipper had thus moistened his scorched interior, the strings of his tongue were unloosed, and he said hoarsely, "Well, Jack, how's things?" "Oh," replied the mate, "everything's all right but you. Why on earth you can't have a spree and done with it, I don't know. Of course it doesn't matter to me very much; I can get a ship at any time, but I'm hanged if I like to see a man going to the devil out of sheer cussedness."

"O Jack, Jack, let up on me," groaned the miserable skipper; "let up on me till I feel able to

talk back. It's a shame to hit a man when he's down, an' I'm down now as far as I can git. Not but what you mean well, and I do believe are the best friend, if not the only friend, I've got, but you do hurt." "I mean to," said the mate, "an' if I knew anythin' to say that'd hurt you more, I'd say it. However, let that go just now while I tell you the story. We're a couple of hundred miles on our way to Tristan, everything is going on well with the ship, and we've got a thundering good crowd, wherever you picked 'em up. There's only one man on board I've got my doubts about, and that's Handasyde, the bosun. I've had to check him at the beginning for trying to raise a mutiny amongst a good crowd, and I'm a bit doubtful of him ever since." He would have been still more doubtful of him had he seen the bosun at that moment straining his ears to hear what was being said about him. He lay in his bunk, his ugly head reaching out towards the door of his little den, and a perfectly diabolical grin upon his face as he thought how easily he was getting to know what the mate thought of him.

"Ah, well," said the skipper, "there's always one black sheep in every flock, Bunce, and I'm glad you've got a good crowd anyhow; for you're a rare good chap, and I hope you'll get the schooner if anything happens to me. I know I can't last long like this, my boy, and somehow I don't care. I've got no one to care for. I thought after being

a roustabout for so many years that if ever I got a bit of money I could be master and owner of my own ship, however small, and I should be as happy as the day was long. But instead of that I've played the fool. I've lost all my money, for the schooner's mortgaged up to her trucks, and if it hadn't been for you, Jack, I'd have gone under long ago. Thanks, old man; and now I'll clean up and come on deck." The mate turned to go, but before ascending the ladder he thought of something, and returning said, "I shipped a smart little English lad that was at a loose end in Cape Town, and hoped to have had him in my watch, but it has so fallen out that he is under the bosun, who, if I don't mistake, is giving him a rough time. He's a good little chap, and if you can save him a bit while I am below, I should take it very kindly. I only hope I shan't catch the bosun ill-using him, that's all. If I do——" He turned and went on deck, leaving the sentence unfinished, but no doubt in his skipper's mind that things would be very uncomfortable for the bosun if the mate did catch him ill-using Jemmy.

When eight bells struck that afternoon Jemmy was foremost on deck as usual, and seizing a broom began to be busy sweeping down. Suddenly he heard a voice, unfamiliar to him, calling out, "Boy, come here." He started, turned, and, seeing a strange figure on the quarter-deck, he ran aft, saying, "Yes, sir; did you want me?" The skipper,

for it was he, answered, "Yes, my lad, put your broom away, and come aft again." Jemmy obeyed, and when he again reached the skipper's side that worthy said to him, "Mr. Bunce says that you're a smart lad; now, can you steer?" "Yes, sir," answered Jemmy, and running to the wheel he received it from the hands of the helmsman before the relief of the watch came aft. Farther forward the bosun gloomed, hardly knowing what to say or do, but feeling violently angry at his butt being thus noticed by the skipper. Just a few moments were sufficient to show the skipper that Jemmy was quite at home with the wheel, keeping indeed a better course than the man had done who had just left the wheel to him. Having satisfied himself that the wheel was in good hands, the skipper strode forward to the mainmast and called in a voice that seemed like a trumpet, "All hands lay aft." The watch just relieved had hardly gone below, when the call startled them, and turning they came back to where the skipper was standing. As soon as all hands were gathered the skipper said, "Boys, I've not been able to make your acquaintance owing to my being ill. But I see everything's going ship-shape and Bristol fashion, so that's all right. Now, we're only a small crowd, and I want that we should all be happy. The trip's a hard one, but there's plenty of money in it, and whatever we make over and above signed-for wages we all share in. If any man's got a grievance, let him

come to me with it. Mr. Bunce here is a good man, and won't put upon anybody, I know; and as for the bosun, I don't know him yet, but by the look of him I should say he's a sailor man every inch. I know the grub's good, for I saw to every pound of it being bought; and as for the schooner, she's as good as she can be, if she isn't ten thousand ton. Now we'll have a glass of grog, and wish success to the cruise, and good-fellowship to all." The cook, who had been previously instructed, brought a jug of rum, and all hands had a glass, finishing with the skipper, who said as he tossed it off, "Right oh! that'll do, the watch."

The bosun was now in a most awkward position. He knew that the mate had given the skipper his views upon driving the crew as practised by the bosun, and he now knew also that the skipper had fully endorsed all that the mate had said, and besides, there was that hateful boy at the wheel steering away like any old sailor. You may say, "But why should he hate little Jemmy?" The question is quite natural, but, my dear boys, you will have to learn that there are some men (and women) who will hate other people without any cause, yes, and hate them more violently than they would if they had a cause. It is an old puzzle, which you will find in the Psalms, but it excites as much wonder to-day as it did then, "Why am I hated by so-and-so?" Unfortunately the bosun was now cut off from the fellowship of his kind, for he had made

himself so objectionable, that there was no one for him to talk to. And that is a terrible condition to be in on board ship. So that in spite of the fact that he had brought this condition of things entirely upon himself, we must pity him. It seems so impossible for some people to learn that golden rule for being loved, "Show yourself lovable."

For the present, however, Jemmy was a direct gainer, for although he feared the bosun as much as ever, and trembled to his heart every time he heard his voice, he did not now get any sly kicks and punches or ear-pullings as he had done, and was duly grateful for the change. But altogether his life was much harder than it had ever been before. The vessel indeed was small, but then so was the crew, and there seemed always to be a tremendous lot of work to do, of which he took his share the same as any of the men, never getting let off any duty as long as he had the strength to perform it. He took his trick at the wheel and his look-out regularly, and, indeed, except that he was a light-weight on the rope, was almost as good as a man, so well had the lessons taught him by Mr. Burney been learned. And in saying this, I do not want to be understood that Jemmy was a very exceptional boy. I have known many lads who at the end of their first year at sea were as good as any ordinary man at the work of the ship except for their lack of strength, and that was often made up for by willingness to do

all in their power. But in Jemmy's case his ability and eagerness to do all that in him lay soon grew to be looked upon as a matter of course, and in consequence he was often expected to do, and did do, tasks that were really beyond his strength. Still the hard fight and the good food, did him service, and he grew stronger and abler, while at the same time he preserved the quiet and respectful bearing that always counts for so much at sea. And in the fo'c'sle all the men treated him just like one of themselves, except that with that good feeling so often found among sailors they did not use the ordinary foul language or discuss the usual nasty questions before him, which of course was good for themselves as well as for him.

If you look on the map or chart of the South Atlantic you will see that it is by no means a long distance (as distances go at sea) from Cape Town to Tristan d'Acunha. It is roughly 1500 miles, almost due west, but as the prevailing winds in those latitudes are westerly, in a sailing vessel it becomes necessary to go a long way north first in order to get into the region of variable winds on the edge of the Trades, or if fortunate get hold of the south-east Trade winds themselves, which would enable the course to be made good to that lonely mountain in the middle of the great Southern Sea. In this kind of navigating the *Ione* had a great deal the advantage of a square-rigged vessel, her fore and aft canvas allowing her to lie so much

closer to the wind. But even then it was a wearisomely long job, for they had much bad weather, gales of wind, and then calms and rain squalls, all making much worry and causing the usual silly talk among the sailors about their being like Vanderdecken, the Flying Dutchman, who was doomed to sail for ever in the vicinity of the Cape of Good Hope without being able to get round it. At last their complainings began to affect Jemmy himself, who suffered then all a boy's fears of the unknown without any experience to cheer him or any one to whom he could apply for information, for since he had been in the bosun's watch he had hardly exchanged a word with his hero Mr. Bunce, but had to be content to admire him afar off.

When, however, they had been a month out from Cape Town Jemmy relieved the wheel one morning at four bells (six o'clock), and Olaf, from whom he took it, when he had given him the course, pointed to a conical cloud in the sky, saying, "Dere, Tommy; you see de top ohf Tristan now. He's 'bout a hundert miles away, I dink, but dere he is, unt ve kets dere sometime, I s'pose." Jemmy took the wheel without further response than to repeat the course, but that white "sugar loaf" in the sky fixed among the flying masses of cloud had a strange fascination for him. He could not doubt the truth of what Olaf had told him, but do what he would, he was compelled to feel a strange awe as he gazed upon that lonely peak away up in the

gloomy sky, without as far as he could see any solid foundation. But his thoughts were soon roughly brought to his present work, for the bosun coming aft and looking in the compass, said roughly, "Now, then, where are you goin' with the vessel? I'll sling ye forrard out of this if ye don't steer better." And Jemmy fixed his mind firmly on his steering and tried to forget everything else.

Next day at dawn all hands were called to handle the little cargo they had brought, for the vessel was close up to the tiny bay in which the few houses comprising the settlement nestled, and a big whale-boat, manned by the roughest-looking men Jemmy had ever seen, was alongside waiting to receive the articles they so sorely needed. Small as the *Ione* was, it was not possible for her to go in and anchor, for there was a tremendous swell rolling in, and only the great floating barrier of sea-weed breaking the swell enabled even a boat to come near and land without great danger of being dashed to pieces against the mountainous cliffs. But in spite of the busy time, Jemmy had to admire and wonder at the mighty mountain thus rising out of the middle of the ocean, and to feel also a great pity for the little colony of people who had thus voluntarily cut themselves off from the great world without, or who had been born there and knew nothing different.

And then suddenly a strange thing happened.

The bosun, who had been working hard like all the rest, but in silence, to get the stores up and into the boat, suddenly flung himself upon Olaf like a wild-cat and tore at him as if he would murder him then and there. A tremendous struggle ensued, in which the men were separated, and Olaf, sobbing, bleeding, and terrified, was hustled forward to the fo'c'sle, while, held by Jacob and Thomas, the bosun gasped out his hatred not merely of Olaf, but of everybody on board. The one clear idea he seemed to have was to get out of the ship, and he didn't care how, even if he had to kill somebody he would do it. The man was evidently, for the time at least, out of his mind. Then the mate, standing like a pillar of strength, said, "Let the bosun go," and the two seamen released him. "Now, bosun," said the mate, "you're too good a man to play the fool like this. Do be reasonable and kindly. I'm sure everything's going on all right, and nobody's making any trouble. Whatever, then, do you want to go on like this for?" While he was speaking the bosun had been rubbing his arms where he had been held, and looking as if he did not hear. But suddenly he sprang at the mate, his right hand clutching a long knife which he had concealed in his clothes. In another moment it would have been plunged into the mate's breast, but Jemmy, with a shrill scream, sprang at the upraised arm and hung on to it like a cat. The furious bosun turned upon the lad, but Mr. Bunce had made a

stride forward, and catching the wrist that held the knife in one hand and the hairy, monstrous throat with the other, bent him over backwards and fell on him. In half a minute the handcuffs were locked upon the bosun's wrists, and Jemmy, fainting, sobbing, and white, was being petted as a little hero.

CHAPTER VIII

HURRIEDLY they secured the would-be murderer and finished their task of loading the boat, which departed for the shore with the news. Then the sails were double reefed, and the schooner stood off the land a bit to wait for the next chance of discharging the remainder of the little cargo she had brought, and as soon as she was made snug, the question was raised what should now be done. In 'so small a community as that they could certainly not dare to run the risk of having a man loose among them who was evidently bent upon killing somebody—it hardly seemed to matter who, for Olaf, like so many Scandinavian seamen, was, while a good sailor, most harmless and inoffensive. Landing him was out of the question, even if the islanders would allow it, for they wanted every man for the work they were about to undertake—the getting of sea-elephant oil from the sealers on Gough and Inaccessible Islands near by. No one seemed to know what to suggest, and at last the mate said, “Oh, let it alone, boys; he ain't half a bad fellow, though a bit cranky, and I expect after a night in irons he'll be willing enough to let things go on smoothly. Anyhow, I ain't afraid of him, and I'll

talk him over." But the skipper said, "Yes, that's just like you, Jack. But I've got to look after you. We can't afford any harm to happen to you, and it's your blood he evidently hankers after. I'll take your advice as far as letting him alone to-night is concerned, but I'm hanged if I like the idea of taking him on with us. Much better give him his liberty ashore and try if we can't get a tired sealer or two from Gough or Nightingale Islands."

To this there was no reply, could hardly be, because of the necessity for waiting to see what the morning would bring forth. So all hands prepared to spend the wild and stormy night as comfortably as they could, which indeed was not saying much, seeing how small the vessel was and how bad the weather was becoming. The hours dragged slowly by until midnight, when the skipper took the watch. The weather had steadily become worse, and now the tumult of tormented sea and raging gale was terrible. The vessel, a mere speck upon the wild waste of waters, was tossed from one billow to another like a cork, but gallantly kept her head to the sea, her only hope of safety lying in her ability so to do. The watch, consisting of the skipper, Olaf, Scotty, and Jemmy, were crouched aft by the wheel, sheltering as best they could, and enduring, for indeed there was nothing now to be done but await the breaking of the gale and be ready to secure anything that might show a tendency to work adrift and endanger the vessel. With dulled senses

they thus waited, until suddenly in the midst of a blinding squall a dark body suddenly leapt aft upon the skipper, striking savagely at him with something held in its right hand. The two men and Jemmy were paralysed for the moment, but the wild, despairing scream of the skipper ringing for a moment above the noise of the storm startled them into violent activity, and they hurled themselves upon the enemy, alas! too late. The furious bosun, for it was he, who had succeeded in slipping his handcuffs and possessing himself of a knife, snatched at Jemmy, and flung himself sideways at the rail, intending evidently to tumble overboard with the boy clasped in his arms. But Scotty, just in time, caught Jemmy by the legs, and as the bosun jerked over the side, Scotty's grip held good and tore the boy from the raging villain's grasp. There was one wild yell as the bosun dropped into the boiling foam beneath the counter and disappeared.

Panting, breathless, the two men and the boy lay helplessly on deck for a few moments. Then staggering to their feet they raised the skipper, shuddering to find their hands all sticky with blood. As best they could they bore the poor body below, crying aloud for the mate. Mr. Bunce was out in a moment, and as calmly as a surgeon in an hospital stripped the clothes from his skipper's limp body, only to find that he was past all help; the five or six vengeful stabs he had received had let all the life out long before. There was a silent pause

for a minute in the presence of death, and then Mr. Bunce said quietly, "Now, boys, tell me all about it." Simply, haltingly, they told him all they knew of the occurrence, and when he had heard it he replied, "May God forgive me, I never thought that little demon could get adrift. I believe the poor skipper has died instead of me. Well, I hope I've learned a lesson that will last me all my life. I liked him well, and for his own sake I spoke harshly to him, but I didn't think he'd go like this. However, I'm glad the bosun's gone. Had he remained, I should have felt inclined to kill him myself for a vicious little brute that nothing could make human. Thank God he wasn't able to do any more murder before he went." Then Scotty told how nearly Jemmy had gone too, and Mr. Bunce, moved beyond the usual stern self-control of Englishmen, caught the boy in his strong arms and kissed him, wetting his young cheek with manly tears. Jemmy burst into a violent fit of sobbing. He had only been kissed once before like that in his recollection, and that was by Mrs. Wilson, for the Italian sailors didn't count. This experience was quite different to that though, and it made him feel as if something was breaking inside him.

Suddenly everybody remembered the vessel left alone without watchers like a derelict, and hastily composing the dead man's limbs and covering them with a blanket from his bed, they went on deck.

She was riding quite easily, the wind blowing strong, steady, and true, while through a rift in the dark pall of cloud the glorious moon shed a flood of silver light upon the desolate scene. The gale was evidently taking off, and the mate recognising this on the instant said, "Olaf and Scotty, get the stay-foresail and foresail reefed and ready to set. Jemmy, start a fire in the galley and make some coffee. It'll be all hands in a few minutes, and we shall want a livener. Now then, boys, hurry up; we don't know when those big rollers will come thundering in, an' if they catch us too close ashore, we shall have a narrow squeak to claw off, if we do claw off at all." Olaf and Scotty obeyed with alacrity, achieving wonders in the next few minutes, while from the galley came the cheerful sound of grinding and the refreshing smell of coffee as Jemmy did his share of the work. Eight bells, and Jacob, Thomas, and Hans came climbing up the ladder on deck, heavy with the foul air below in which they had been sleeping. But the fresh, strong breeze revived them almost immediately, although it made them shiver, and Jemmy, putting his head out of the galley door, cried at the pitch of his young lungs, "Coffee!" Then the mate striding forward said, "That's right, boys, get your coffee first, then we'll pile the rags on her, for I want to get ashore as soon as possible now the gale's taking off. Scotty and Olaf will tell you what has happened while you are getting your coffee. But

don't make the yarn too long, for time's precious." Jemmy having served the men ran aft with the coffee-pot, and with a celerity quite amazing, considering how little practice he had been able to get at this kind of thing, got a cup and saucer and some bread and butter, bringing it to the mate as he stood at the wheel, with a subdued air of pride as one who knows that his services will be appreciated at their proper worth. The mate took his coffee with a quiet "Thank you, Jemmy," but it was evident that his thoughts were far away, and Jemmy slipped off to get his own pannikin of hot comfort.

When he joined the men in the fo'c'sle they were talking in subdued tones, for the story told by Scotty and Olaf had impressed them much. But they brightened up when Jemmy appeared, and made so much of him that he felt a choking sensation—he was so glad that they thought so well of him. Be it set down to their credit that, much as they hated the awful crime that the bosun had committed, they yet had some pity for him as a man led away by his terrible temper and by his being practically thrown back upon his own evil heart for company, since no one else would have anything to do with him. The poor skipper, of whom they had seen so little, was spoken of in the most endearing terms, and then "Make sail" came peeling down to them. Pipes were hurriedly put away, and up they scrambled, finding to their

amazement that she was quite close to the land. But the weather was fining so rapidly that there was no real danger, remembering that they were men who knew their work and could do it. In half-an-hour she was under all the sail she could carry, and Olaf, Scotty, and Jemmy were dismissed to their stuffy bunks for a little hard-earned sleep.

When they again awoke to the harsh call of "Turn out there, below," the *Ione* was close in, and a whale-boat was alongside taking the remainder of the stuff for the shore. The mate was in earnest conversation with two rough-looking men aft, evidently telling them the story of what had happened. And presently when the boat steered off the mate called all hands aft and said, "It's all right, boys; these two good men here are glad of the chance of a ship, so that we shan't be short-handed after all. Now I propose that Jacob here shall be bosun, and we'll finish the trip in good shape." Jacob turned to his shipmates and said, "You know me, boys; you know it'll be all right, and, anyhow, I'm not likely to want to kill anybody." A hearty laugh greeted his little speech, and then the solemn business of committing the poor body of the late skipper to the deep was entered upon. It was sewn up by the mate and Jacob in a piece of old canvas, and, covered with a flag, was laid on a plank at the gangway. All hands gathered around, and the mate, bowing his head, said, "Shipmates, I've got no book, and I don't know quite what

ought to be done. But I know that the skipper was a good fellow at heart, although he was a fool to himself. He never as far as I know did any harm to anybody, and I do know of his doing many a kindly deed. And I feel sure that the good God will have mercy on him. So I'll just say the only prayer I know, and we'll send him to his long rest. Bowing his head the mate repeated "Our Father," and at the close the plank was tilted, and the body of the late skipper slid off into the depths of the sea.

Only a moment or two of silent thought passed, and then in a clear, high voice the new skipper gave his orders for all sail to be made. All hands sprang cheerily obedient to the call, and in a few minutes the schooner was headed for Inaccessible Island, where, in spite of its name, there was a small party of hardy men engaged in wringing a very scanty livelihood from the sea. For the bare necessities of life and the collection of oil and skins they had obtained they were dependent upon the visits of the *Ione*, and her coming was the one pleasurable event in their hard lives to which they could look forward. It presently turned out that the two new hands, Dick and Bill Greenwood, had friends on both the Inaccessible and Nightingale Islands whom they had not seen for many months, and they were quite elated at the notion of seeing them again, speaking of them in the most affectionate terms. This pleasant trait drew Jemmy towards them in

spite of the extraordinary roughness in their appearance, making them look more like bears or great apes than men. Besides, he was attracted by the wonderful hardihood they showed. They seemed as if they were almost like the seals or penguins, proof against cold or hunger. The coarsest food was a luxury to them, and they could lie about on deck in the cold and wet as if they were lolling in a sweet meadow under a summer sun. They told him in the simplest language tales of their struggles to live that made his scalp tingle and his eyes smart. For one thing, he had not had much opportunity to read stories of adventure even if he had possessed the ability to do so, and as he had only just acquired that indispensable art, he could not be expected to do much at it. So he fell back upon the world-old fashion of story-telling, and found in listening to what others had to say a never-failing source of delight. Dick, the elder of the two men, had been a soldier in the American Civil War, a whaler, a sealer, and between whiles a sailor of the hardest, roughest type. But with all his wonderful experiences he still retained a certain fresh, child-like simplicity of character which was intensely fascinating to little Jemmy (but I shall soon have to stop calling him little Jemmy). One yarn he told Jemmy that first night they were together lives in my memory, and I will repeat it here, believing, as I do, that it was as true as the Bible.

"My mate Bill and me was with a party at Gough Islan' a-getting elephants (sea-elephants). An' one day we was all coming back from Cat Point to our beach towin' a lot of blubber when a big roller came sweepin' in, it bein' quite calm, an' catchin' the boat broadside on, rolled her over as if she had nothin' in her. It seemed as if I was under water about ten minutes, for when I come to the top I was nearly bustin'. However, I struck out, lookin' as well as I could for the boat. But I didn't see her, an', thinks I, Bill's a pretty poor swimmer, I wonder how he's a-makin' out. An' that made me feel dreadful bad. I couldn't bear to think of him drownin, didn't seem to care about the other four at all. At last I got so down heart because I couldn't see Bill, that I thinks to myself, I don't care to go on if Bill's gone. An' I hadn't more'n thought that when Bill's face, all gashly white, catches my eye. He was a-hangin' on to the blubber we'd been towin', and the boat was gone. He looked as if he was dead. But I felt sure that he wasn't, and I was that glad to see him, that I didn't think of him dying. I swam up to him and got him in my arms, managin' to make him fast to the biggest piece of blubber with a loose end of the towline. Then I started to push a lump of the blubber tords the shore, until I bethought me I was a fool to waste me strength—the rollers'd sure set the whole lot ashore somewhere. So I eased up

and just looked after Bill from goin' under. I didn't know how much I liked him till then. Every now and then I felt as if I'd like to go to sleep, but I'd pull myself together thinkin' what'd become of Bill if I did. But I must ha' gone off at last, for I don't remember anythin' more till me foot hit agin a rock, an' I started to pull Bill ashore. Yes, an' I got him ashore too, although the surf was pretty bad, an' I very nearly give in two or three times. When I did pull him up beyond high-water mark (I couldn't get him much farther) I felt meself goin' off to sleep agin, so thinks I, I'll smuggle up close to Bill, and p'raps my keepin' him warm'll do him good. An' it did, for we both woke up together, an' didn't know where we was. An' the best of the luck was, I had my pipe, bacca, and matches in a tin box in my jumper pocket, an' we was able to have a smoke, cause the water couldn't get in an' wet 'em. An' I never had a smoke what done me so much good as that one. An' Bill said so too."

Jemmy sat with mouth wide open and staring eyes listening to the simple story of self-sacrifice, told so unconsciously too. And when he saw that the recital was over he said, "What—what became of Bill?" "Bill," replied Dick; "oh, he's here, he's my chum still." Jemmy said no more, but felt quite relieved to hear the bell strike announcing the change of the watch, for he wanted to be alone with his own thoughts about this

wonderful world in which he was moving. He had little time for thought though, for, like all healthy boys, he was hardly in his bunk before he went to sleep, and when he awoke it was to the cry of "All hands." Rushing on deck he saw to his affright that the schooner was almost alongside of a vast vertical wall of rock, black and savage looking, and nowhere showing an inch of foothold even for a goat. There was hardly any wind, but the oily sea had a heavy swell, a long roll in it, so that now and then it struck against the foot of the cliffs in a mass of snowy foam. The schooner was drifting along the cliffs anxiously watched by the skipper, for holding ground there was none, even had an anchor been able to reach the bottom with all the chain the schooner possessed attached to it. For these islands are really vast mountain peaks rising almost perpendicularly from the sea-bed several thousand feet below, with just their crests sticking up to form lonely islands. Slowly the schooner passed from point to point, almost as if she had a little engine on board that was propelling her, until suddenly she opened up a little crevice between two mighty towers of rock. The helm was put down, and the handy little vessel glided up into the tiny harbour thus formed in the face of the mountain, as it were. She had sufficient way on her to carry her well in, and presently Jemmy's wondering eyes noted that she seemed to be entirely

shut in from the sea, as much so as if she had been lifted high up into the air and lowered down on to the bosom of a lake among the mountains. The anchor was now let go and a rope carried out astern and made fast to the rocks so that she should not swing, for which indeed there was hardly room.

While this evolution was being performed Jemmy had time to notice that on some pieces of level ground that crouched up against the bases of the mountains there were some rude huts, and outside of them a few uncouth figures. These came strolling down to the little beach, and as they saw the schooner swing quietly into her place they raised a hoarse cheer. Presently a boat was launched and six men got into her, coming alongside with just a push or two of the oars. They were a queer-looking lot, hairy, begrimed, and clothed in all sorts of odds and ends of ragged garments, hung on to their bodies in novel style. It was impossible at first to say of what race they were, for their colour was a pale brown, but they all spoke fairly understandable English, and this fact lessened the alarm that Jemmy was inclined to feel at their wild appearance. Presently he was still more relieved, for the newcomers spoke to him in the kindest tones, saying, "My, but I am glad to see a little English boy again; I hain't seen one in years."

Then all hands and the visitors settled down to

a long yarn, such as only men can enjoy who have been cut off from all communication with the outside world for many months. The most trifling details about the great busy life of the world they had been exiled from seemed to be to them of the greatest interest, their own wild adventurous life in this lonely outpost appearing to them like the most ordinary set of everyday occurrences. Whenever they spoke of their hunting, of the conflict with gale and sea, of their successes and failures, Jemmy listened spell-bound, it all seemed so wonderful. It appeared that the season had been a very poor one, the sea-elephants had been shy, and the fishers had only managed to get together enough oil and skins, by the fiercest and most savage labour, to pay for their necessary provisions. "But," said one of them, "it doesn't matter much. As long as we can get enough to eat and enough time to sleep, I guess that's all we need. We've all lost the taste for luxuries if we could get 'em. And I suppose we are better off than a good many poor devils at home in the old country. But I do ache to see her again before I die. This barren land has got on my stomach, so that I feel I'd be content to die if I could only take a walk in a town at home."

While he was talking Jemmy happened to glance over the side towards the beach, and suddenly cried out, "Oh look, cap'en, there's a lot of big things getting out of the sea up on the rocks there!"

All hands sprang to their feet, gave one glance in the direction indicated by the boy, and there was to be seen a whole herd of sea-elephants climbing ashore; the rocks were just swarming with their huge, lumbering forms. All hands suddenly sprang into the most violent activity, routing out weapons and tools from the hold and clearing away the two fine boats that the schooner carried. Still as they worked the great creatures of the sea continued to arrive, until the whole of the little landing-place was filled by them.

A few hurried orders were given, the men leaped into the boats, and as the captain stepped over he said to Jemmy, "You keep the cook company for the time. The game we are going to play is too rough for you, but you're in luck, you'll be able to sit on the taffrail and watch the fight. I needn't tell you not to get into mischief; you ain't that sort. Just you sit and pray that we may have a good haul. So long, Jemmy." He stepped into his boat and shoved off, and Jemmy and the cook were left in charge of the *Ione*. The cook, whom I have not described before, was a quiet, good-natured mulatto, whose one aim in life was to keep on good terms with everybody by doing his best to please them. He was not at all sorry to be left to himself, for, as he said to his companion, "De capen tole me t' make a good supper ready fur to-night, kase wen dey comes back dey'll all be mighty tired, and hungry like wolves. So you'll

s'cuse me, mistah boy; I gotter be gettin' on wid my preparations fur de banquet." Jemmy made no answer, for the cook did not seem to expect one, but he ran aft and perched himself upon the taffrail, watching with interest and eagerness the movements of his friends.

Indeed it was a sight to fire the blood of any boy. The whole of the sea front was crowded with huge animals, large as hippopotami, and not at all unlike them, and as each of them was uttering a roar like a dozen furious bulls, the noise was deafening. For all their clumsy movements their bulk was so great and their aspect was so terrible that it looked like the very madness of heroism to attack them, especially without other arms than a short, hardwood club and a long knife. Jemmy held his breath, therefore, as he saw his friends scramble ashore and cut off the monsters' retreat to the sea. He could not believe his own eyes when he saw the men, looking like children at the distance compared with the elephant seals, spreading themselves out fanwise and rushing to the attack. And then he rubbed his eyes with amazement as he saw one huge beast after another fall like a pricked bladder under the skilful blows of the sealers. They just seemed to give the giant seal a tap on the nose, where the short bladder-like trunk joined the head, and down it went. No sooner was it down than a long knife was drawn across the great swelling throat and a flood

of hot, black blood burst forth, often covering the slaughterer.

Soon the whole area available was bestrewn with the huge carcasses, but still the slayers slew on. So weary were they that they stumbled on the smoothest ground, but nevertheless kept up the great killing, until not a single seal remained alive. And then they lay down among the carcasses of their victims, heedless of the grease and blood, and lighting their pipes enjoyed a restful smoke, having indeed earned the best of all refreshments when the body is utterly weary. But Jemmy sat still on the taffrail watching the shore and wishing that he too might have taken part in their perils as he thought them, pitying them for the mighty labours, and building boyish castles in the air as to the enormous profits they would earn out of this great catch. After an hour he saw to his great delight the whole of them rise up stiffly and come towards their boats. Slowly they embarked and pushed off to the schooner, and Jemmy rushed to the gangway to welcome them, his face aglow with admiration. But it was not admiration they needed, it was food and rest. And the darkie cook, who had been steadfastly toiling in his galley, came out as they climbed aboard, crying, "Come on, gen'men, your supper's ready foh yeh." The cry seemed to revive them, and in a very few minutes they were all seated at a hearty meal, eating like men who had long been starved, while

Jemmy hovered about waiting on them and admiring them as heroes.

No sooner had they finished their meal than they sought the shelter of the fo'c'sle and cabin for the sleep they so much needed, and the skipper calling Jemmy and the cook said, "Now I want you two to keep watch turn about. Boy, you are willing enough, I know; d'you think I can trust you to keep awake for four hours and then call the cook?" Jemmy answered promptly, "Oh yes, sir; I can keep awake all night if you like." The skipper laughed shortly and said, "All right, good lad, but we won't try young brains as much as that. You keep awake till ten, and then call the cook, and he'll watch till two. Then he'll call you. Make coffee at five, and call us all. And if you see anything that frightens you, come and call me at once, and remember we're all trusting to you in case any serious danger threatens. Now good-night, and keep good watch." And with that he lumbered off to his bunk, leaving Jemmy on watch alone.

CHAPTER IX

FOR a little while Jemmy sat on deck full of the importance of his trust. So quiet was the night that he could hear the loud snoring of his shipmates in their first heavy sleep above the sullen murmur of the Southern Ocean without that little cove. And then he fell a-thinking of all that had happened to him since he had joined the *Rosamund* in Liverpool. What had gone before did not trouble him; that seemed to belong to another life, with which he had nothing to do. It was as if he had died since then and was now living again. And as he thought, he looked up and watched the low clouds flying over the cliffs that towered above him; watched the sweet, pale face of the moon shining clearly upon him at one moment and then suddenly plunge into thick darkness behind a massy cloud. The shore was hidden, but he knew those rows of carcasses were there, and he had a queer little thrill at the thought of all that death where there had been so much life so short a time before. Now I know that grown-ups will pooh-pooh at this, and say that boys don't think of these things; but we know better; boys do, and the only pity is that so many boys as they become men forget these long medita-

tions of their boyish days, and in so doing lose half the joy of living.

So Jemmy sat and thought, until presently he knew that he was going to sleep. And that frightened him. For he felt that for him to sleep at his watch, when so much had been committed to his charge, was an unpardonable sin; he could not do it. And he jumped up, pulled himself together, and with stealthy steps prowled all around the schooner's decks, peering into every corner as if some danger might be lurking there, gazing over the side into the black depths as if he expected to see something rise up in the shape of an enemy, and generally trying to keep himself awake. But it was hard work. Willing and anxious as he was to do his duty he felt terribly sleepy, and as he was only a boy, the feeling was very hard to battle against. And I am sure that he would have been beaten, with all his honest desire to do right, but that he suddenly had an idea, "Why shouldn't I try and catch some fish?" The thought even awakened him, and springing into activity, he ran to the locker in the companion where the fishing gear was kept and brought out a couple of stout lines. He did not know much about fishing, but he had seen what a fascination it had for others, and while endeavouring to prepare the lines he felt something of the same excitement.

Some little time elapsed before he had found bait, some pieces of fat pork, and stuck them

clumsily on the hooks, then with a pleasant tremor of anticipation he lowered the lines over the side into the dark, inscrutable water. It was a moment of agitation, because he had not the slightest idea what strange, uncouth monsters from those dark depths might answer his invitation; in fact, the whole performance was full of ghostly mystery. But he felt the sinkers touch the bottom, made the lines fast, and then, his heart beating much faster than it usually did, he leaned over the side and waited for a sign from beneath. For some time, seeming much longer than it really was, he waited and nothing happened; not the slightest trembling of either line gave any token that the inhabitants of the deep were inclined to accept his invitation. And he felt as if, should fishing be as slow as this, he must try some other means of keeping awake, for the strong desire of sleep was again tugging at his eyelids, when suddenly, with a hissing sound, one of the lines slid through his fingers. He grabbed at it frantically and hauled with all his might. Oh, but it was heavy. He had no thought of playing his fish or of the possibility of his line parting; he only knew that there was something on the hook, and he put forth all his strength to get whatever it was up to the rail. Then he missed a grab at the line, and the fish below getting its head rushed away, the line slithering through Jemmy's fingers with a burning sensation that would have made him cry out only that he was too full of the joy of

battle to mind a little thing like that. He checked the run, hauled again, this time with renewed vigour, until with a joy that he had never felt before he saw a broad sheen of light in the water, and felt that he had hold of a prize indeed. Yes, he had, but he had not got that prize yet by a long way, for the fish fought with all its might for freedom, and four different times it tore the line from his fingers and ran it out till it reached the fastened end. At last he noticed that the heavy jerkings ceased, and the tired creature, yielding to its fate, only hung heavily, almost a dead weight, upon the line, while the elated fisherman hauled as if he had never known fatigue. The prize came to the surface, and without thinking whether the hook would hold, Jemmy hauled upward still, taking two hands to the pull, until with one tremendous effort he hauled the fish in over the rail and fell along with it on deck.

There are many joys in life, but few I think would compare with the joy that Jemmy felt as he struggled to regain his feet, and saw the great silvery fish beating the deck with its broad tail, and realised that he, alone, without any help, had made so great a capture. It was indeed a beauty, over sixty pounds in weight, and when Jemmy essayed to drag it away into a place of shelter from the moon's rays (for he had heard that the moon turns fish bad), he wondered vaguely how he had been able to haul it up. But he had

little time to gloat over his catch. A curious sound at the rail made him run and clutch at the other line, to find that another huge fish had taken that bait also. Another long struggle followed, another severe testing of the line and Jemmy's strength, and again the joy of victory over a fish even bigger than the first. But although boys are not prudent, cannot be, his aching muscles compelled him to realise that, glorious as this sport was, he could not go on with it. He felt that if he caught another fish like those he would not be able to get it aboard, so he determined to give himself a rest and gloat a while over his great catch.

Accordingly he sat down by the side of the two fish and gazed exultantly upon their fine outlines, pictured to himself the astonishment of his shipmates when they saw what he had accomplished, and, indeed, tasted all the delight of victory. And then as he sat quivering all over with the sense of great deeds done he felt a curious rumbling, a sensation as if the schooner had suddenly dropped down upon the rocks beneath her, noticed a foul smell of sulphur in the air, and became thoroughly frightened. But he waited, feeling that as to him had been committed the watch, he must not too readily disturb the rest of those very tired men. Again he felt the curious sensation of being lifted up and dropped suddenly upon something hard, quite unlike any motion of the waves that he had ever felt. Then the schooner swept forward sud-

denly as if some great giant under the sea had given her a push, and as suddenly she fell back again, until brought up by her cable with a jerk that made the boy feel horribly sick. That brought every one rushing on deck, and for a few moments there was a scene of wild confusion, a babel of tongues, all asking whatever could have happened. But Jemmy could not tell them; all his usual keen wits seemed to have left him for the time, and he was shaking as if with severe cold.

Presently the skipper, first to get fully awake, guessed the cause, and announced a small earthquake, nothing to be afraid of, he said, but just a little shake of the big elephant's tail upon whose back the earth rested. But his clumsy attempt at a joke did not meet with any laughter, for all felt the situation was far too serious for fun. And although they were all so weary, no more sleep visited them that night. They sat about and smoked and talked and secretly longed for day, as sailors do in time of danger, for the night seems to add unknown terrors to those with which men are acquainted. It seemed, as it always does to watchers, a weary while coming, but when at last the pale dawn crept down between the gaunt rocks, it was seen that the schooner lay only a biscuit's toss from the precipice astern, and the hawser that had kept her steady was hanging in a bight down in the dark, still water.

But no damage had been done, and as soon as

the schooner had been hauled into position again all hands except the cook hurried ashore to the heavy task of securing the spoil. Catching Jemmy's longing eye the skipper told him he might come, to his great delight, and presently he found himself looking down upon the rows of gigantic bodies lying in shapeless masses, streams of blood leading from them in all directions, but frozen hard. He looked upon his companions too, half-frightened to be in the company of such mighty heroes, for of course his young, untutored mind greatly magnified the danger. And then he watched, fascinated, as with frantic energy the men flung themselves upon the task which lay before them of ripping the hides off the huge carcasses around, dragging them off, and piling them up in heaps near the try-pots for boiling down presently. But he did not stand staring long; young as he was, there was need for even his help, and presently he found himself tugging at a great skin as the man with the big knife slashed away at the carcass and ripped from bone and muscle the heavy coating of leather and fat.

For a little while he thought it great sport, but as he got weary and hungry, and the sickening smell of the oil made him feel sick, he became a little sorry that he had not stayed where he was in quiet and cleanliness. His pride kept him from saying so, as boys' pride will, but he learned, as we must all learn if we would be worth anything,

that work is not fun, and that if we would succeed in anything, we must keep on doing it diligently long after its novelty has worn off, long after the feeling of pride at being able to do it has gone. So he hauled away at the blubber manfully if not joyfully, watched the red heaps of stripped bodies increase and the masses of oil-bearing blubber pile up, until at a word from the skipper three or four men detached themselves, and going over to the try-works started the fires under the pots. But although they had changed their duties they worked no less hard, for each of them had a present interest in the result of their work—they all shared alike, and there was no room there for lazy men.

Suddenly from the schooner there came a loud clanging of the bell—dinner. And then those toiling men realised as if it had just dawned upon them that they were furiously hungry. They dropped their work, and rushed to the boats as if they hadn't a minute to live. The good fellow of a cook had prepared for them a smoking meal, and no sooner had they reached the deck than they saw it spread out before them, ready to the last item. It was coarse food, roughly prepared, but if those people who can have all they want whenever they want it could only enjoy their food one-tenth as much, they would think no price in money too heavy to pay.

Now this sort of life went on for three days, days that passed like hours, so full of work were

they, and on the fourth morning the *Ione*, loaded with the produce of the last great catch and a few barrels they had obtained before, warped slowly out to sea again, leaving that wistful little group of men again to their three months' lonely toil. Jemmy choked with sympathy, felt indeed that he would like to stay with them and share their lot, not that he felt the full fascination of that life, but something, he could not tell what, appealed to him. So with many a handshake and a "so long" they parted, and with infinite care and dexterity the schooner was worked off that terrible coast, meeting the great swell as if it was an old friend, and actually using the rebounding of the wind off the cliffs to get seaward. Of course Jemmy could not know the ugly danger that was attendant upon their exit, but even his experience could not fail to note how near were the frowning cliffs, with what savage energy the great swell, becoming more rapid as it neared the land, hurled itself against the wall-like face of the rock as if it would tear it from its deep-seated hold upon the world. Neither did he need any one to tell him what would be the fate of the schooner should she be caught too near, picked up by the swell and dashed against the mountain side.

I remember once when I was a small boy I was in Havana, where the cigars come from, and one day a terrific storm broke over the harbour. In those days I was practically my own master; no

one thought it worth while to say "don't" to me, and so although ignorantly I was running into great danger, I crept down to the harbour, and there, jammed between two posts, I watched the hurricane play with big ships as if they were chips in a mountain torrent. Sometimes for blinding rain and dazzling lightning I could not see at all; indeed, I had to hold my head well down and gasp for fear lest all the breath should be blown out of my small body. But in one of my glimpses across the harbour I saw the sea and wind pick up a schooner of well over a hundred tons, and lifting her high in the air drop her upon a shelf of rock sixty feet above high-water mark. Of course I did not hear the crash, but I saw her settle down upon the hard shelf like an egg slammed down upon a table, and there she stood, with masts quivering, bolt upright, never to come down again to sail the sea. Fortunately her crew had long before escaped safely to shore.

Once off the land Jemmy found everybody in good spirits and full of talk about the prospects of making a good trip. The wonderful visit of that herd of sea-elephants had made a difference of six or seven pounds to each of them, and with the hopefulness of sailors they were calculating that their visit to Nightingale and Gough Islands would yield them an even greater harvest than that to Inaccessible had. There was no word of the terrible danger, the bone-wrenching toil in between the anticipation and the realisation of their hopes,

already they were picturing themselves swaggering along the streets of Cape Town with much money to spend. And so the talk went on, until Jemmy, forgetting that in any case his share of the most bountiful profits must be very small, and his ability to spend it judiciously be much smaller, began to feel flushed with a desire to get on, to get money, no matter by how severe a process, just for the feverish joy of flinging away the gain of months in a few hours. And in this exciting time he forgot his surroundings, he became as old a sailor as the next man, swaggering about the deck like a budding buccaneer, feeling ready for any adventure however full of peril.

So high was Jemmy's elation, that although the next few hours were full of misery to any one who did not know what a schooner in a southern gale meant, he was audaciously happy. He went to the wheel with a roll borrowed from his idol the skipper, and to his undoing put a quid of tobacco in his cheek. As he stood there he felt that he was a man indeed; and as for the tobacco, it was quite nice, the sweetish, sickly flavour rather appealed to him. But presently, as the poison began to reach his brain, he wondered dimly what the languor was that was overcoming him, why he had an increasing desire to spit, and his limbs trembled under him; also, why he felt suddenly cold, yet the sweat stood out upon him at the same time. Then everything began to go round

with him; sea, schooner, and sky began a wild dance, in the midst of which he lost himself, just being conscious of a slight bump on the head as he was going.

When he came to again he found that the mad dance of the schooner was still going on, and yet it was not the same, there seemed to be more method in it. But his poor head was in a bad state; it ached as if it would burst wide open. He put his hand up to it and found to his wonder that it was tied up in a wet sticky bandage, and as he did so a sharp pain shot through his temples, making him groan aloud. "Hello," cried a gruff but kindly voice, "not dead yet, I see. Well, young fellow, what do you think of yourself, hey? Next time you want to commit suicide you come and tell me, an' I'll show you how to do the job properly. But if ever I catch you shipping a big chaw of tobacco and going to the wheel with it aboard, I shall have to come to the rescue with a rope's end." "Ah, please forgive me, cap'en," moaned Jemmy, "an' I'll never touch the beastly stuff again as long as I live. Oh dear, my head, my head." "Yes, my lad," muttered the skipper, "you may think yourself lucky you've got a head on your shoulders, for when you went off with the effects of that quid the wheel spun round and caught you on the head with a whack that split it open, and you've bled until I thought you wouldn't have another red drop left in you. Now

see, I don't expect you to keep from using tobacco all your life, but you'll have to let it alone while you're with me, and if you don't, you'll come to grief, because I shall apply my universal patent remedy, and don't forget it's a rope's end."

So saying the skipper stooped and put the bandages round Jemmy's head right, gave him a refreshing drink of tea and went on deck, with a word of cheery advice to his patient to try and sleep. But Jemmy could not rest. The foul air of the cabin made his head worse, and so, although he was aching in every limb, he managed to crawl out of his bunk and drag himself on deck. Once there the grandeur of the scene held him speechless, clinging to the first rope he touched. The schooner lay under one tiny triangle of sail, looking so little and helpless amid the vast waste of tormented ocean. All round nothing was visible but the long, long ridges of foaming water, regular as gigantic furrows in a field, a hundred feet between each ridge, which from its foaming crest to the green hollow at its base was about fifty feet. The air was full of salt moisture, the sky was entirely covered with flying masses of dark cloud, and the roar of the battle between wind and wave was deafening. But the gale was full of health, and Jemmy took deep draughts of it, so that although his body shivered with cold, he felt better and stronger every minute.

Then suddenly there appeared before him the

form of the skipper, who said, "Here, young man, what does this mean? thought I told you to go to sleep. This is no place for you; you'll get hurt if one of them big combers come aboard. Better get below, sonny, and sleep it out till you get under the lee of Nightingale, though goodness knows when that'll be," he muttered to himself. "Oh, please let me stop, sir," pleaded Jemmy, "I feel so much better since I've been up here, and the air is so stinky down there." The skipper laughed, his great cheery bellow, and replied, "All right, all right. You're all alike. If you was wanted to stop on deck, you'd be aching to get below; now because you can stop below, you want to be on deck. Well, every one to their taste, as the old woman said when she kissed the cow, but I only wish I'd got the chance of going below and stopping there. Never mind, sonny, stay as long as you like, but be sure and keep a sharp eye to them big seas rolling along, an' if you see one of them looking as if it meant coming aboard, nip below and slam the scuttle to after you."

So saying, the good man slouched aft to where his watch crouched by the lashed wheel and began talking to them. He had hardly been gone ten minutes when Jemmy, who had been watching the mighty waves like a bird fascinated by a snake, saw one rise, rise, rise, until it seemed to stand for a moment, a great wall of solid water

with a curling white ridge atop, against the bottom of which the little schooner leaned. And then he remembered his instructions. Flinging himself into the companion way he tried to close the hatch, but with a roaring crash that huge wall of water descended upon the little craft and enveloped her in a mass of foam. The flood pouring down the companion washed Jemmy from his hold, and half stunned, half drowned, he floundered about the cabin floor, wondering even at that dreadful moment what had become of those poor men on deck. What struck him as strange even then was that the schooner should suddenly become so quiet in her motions compared to what she had been before. So in sudden terror he scrambled up the ladder again and screamed, "Captain, Olaf, Dick, where are you?" In a moment came the answering hail, "All right, my lad, we're all here if there isn't much else." And truly the sea had made a clean sweep of her decks—there was hardly anything left but the bare hull; the masts, bulwark, boat, galley, water-casks, all were gone. She looked utterly bare and forlorn.

But all hands were left, and they were of the kind that take such happenings as that as part of the day's work, and waste no time in useless regrets, but get to work and repair damages. Fortunately it was the gale's last kick, as we say, and no more seas came rolling up of such a huge size

as before. Also out of the thick clouds above there came gleams of light, and presently the whole of the sky to leeward was clear, showing the massive bulk of Nightingale Island quite near apparently. With great care, for a mis-step meant falling overboard, they got a little sail on her, and kept her away before the fast falling wind. As if herself delighted to be set free again, the gallant little craft fled on her course towards the island, which looked to Jemmy as if it were just a sheer pinnacle of rock rising out of the sea without the slightest opening for a landing anywhere. And when the waves struck it, in spite of the distance the beholders were from it, and the great barrier of sea-weed in between, it was easy to see the clouds of spray rising high in air, and being caught by the wind, flying right over the mountain top.

Nothing appeared to matter, however, to the skipper. As coolly as if he were steering a pleasure yacht up a river he steered past that grim peak so closely, that the boom of the waves striking it was distinctly to be heard. And as soon as he was well clear of it he hauled his wind and came up under the lee of the land among the masses of sea-weed, whose enormous fronds kept the sea from rising, and seemed to be placed there as a natural barrier for a land that had no other defence. And then Jemmy saw a strange sight. Leaning over the side, with boat-hooks

the men caught up the great bunches of weed like great black ropes, and actually used them to haul the vessel closer to the shore. It was a tedious, tiring task, but not at all dangerous, and presently, to the relief of everybody on board, a boat was seen working its way out through the weed towards the schooner. But it was noticed that she had only two men in her, and among those on board who knew the islanders there were many fears.

CHAPTER X

THE schooner and the boat came together, a line was flung and made fast, and the two men climbed on board. Then, and not until then, was a word spoken. The skipper said quietly, "What makes ye so short-handed?" To which the visitors replied, "We're all that's left." And, as if they were waiting for the solemn announcement to soak in the minds of the listeners, they remained silent for a minute or two. Then without being questioned one of them said, "Let's get her in an' we'll tell ye all about it." After that, in spite of the great curiosity every one felt, nothing more was said except the necessary orders as the schooner was slowly hauled in through the weed to a little cove, much like the one she had left at Inaccessible Island, but better protected by the weed from the inrushing seas. When once she was secured and supper was ready the story of the islanders could no longer be held back, and it was sufficiently tragic, although it did not take long in telling. Let me try and give it in one of the survivor's own words.

"'Bout a month ago we had a call just as day broke from the look-out man, an' we all turned

out for elephants. It was a pretty day, no wind or swell to speak of, and the elephants was a-comin' in about a thousand strong. We manned boats and got afloat in a very few minutes, and hauled out through the kelp as usual to cut 'em off from goin' to sea agen. An' everything was goin' on all right when, just as we was shakin' hands with ourselves at the big catch we was goin' to have, we in the second boat saw somethin' was a-happenin' to our chums in the first boat. They was a-fightin' with somethin', we couldn't rightly tell what, but just as we got up to 'em we saw the boat all twined round with great white snaky things, which was haulin' her down through the weed, men and all. We was froze stiff with fright, because, mates, you know yourselves what it was, an' how there ain't nothin' more awful than a big squid when he goes after man. Well, we saw 'em go down, an' we tried to get away from that horrible place, but bein' most paralysed with fright we got caught too. But how it was I don't know, I felt kinder lunny, an' I collared the tommyhawk and chopped away with all my might at the long arms as they came sneakin' in after us. Peter here he done the same, and so the boat was saved, but the four good fellows that was in her besides was all picked out and took down below to be eat up.

"Since then we ain't done nothin' but keep alive—couldn't for one thing, for, as you know very

well, this here ain't a job for two men, it's hard enough for six, an' for another we hadn't got no heart left in us. An' another yet, I'm frightened. I've been frightened before, badly frightened too, but it alwus wore off in a little while. Thish yer 'fraid hasn't. I get more an' more frightened as the days go on, and I know I shan't ever go fishin' agen. Every time I looks over the side I can see them awful snaky arms and them dead eyes, an' I am just skeered to death. I want to get as far away from the sea as ever I can. I never want to see it again, no more does my mate, only he ain't got nothin' to say for himself; I haven't been able to git a word out of him with a corkscrew, as the sayin' is, since the affair."

When the miserable man had finished his story, during the telling of which he kept glancing fearfully from side to side as if expecting to see those dread white arms come in over the side and reach for him, the skipper preserved a stony silence for some minutes. Then he said, "Well, this is a bad look-out for me anyhow, for I suppose you've got nothing here for me to take away at all." "Oh yes," said the man, "there's nearly a hundred barrels of oil and several tons of skin. We had quite a big season until the accident happened. And after all it isn't so very long ago, you know." "That's all right then," went on the skipper briskly; "turn to, boys, and let's get this stuff aboard and away, for I can see that these poor devils are done;

they'll never be any good for this work any more, so we'll lose no time in transshipping and hauling seaward again. Somehow I never did like this place myself."

Then first sending the two men down below to have the first easy sleep they had enjoyed for weeks, all hands commenced work, and laboured so hard that before dusk had closed in upon the scene they had all the spoil on board, and finding that the weather was comparatively fine, worked out through the weed and set a course southward for their last port of call, Gough Island.

Now I expect it was because of Jemmy's recent sad fall into trouble that he felt over-satisfied with his experiences in this particular line of seafaring, but at any rate, to tell the plain truth, he felt as if he did not want any more of it. For one thing, he had always been in a big ship, and the cramped quarters of the schooner seemed to stifle him; besides, the great sea was so threateningly near. He began to wonder whether he had not been much too quick in deciding to go off on his own account instead of taking his friends' advice about the matter. And like the prodigal, he came to the conclusion that he had been wrong, and at the earliest opportunity he would put himself right, he didn't know how, but at his age one always expects things to come right about them. However, he was now sufficient of a seaman to know that he had a good deal to go through yet before his term of service

in the *Ione* was up, and like a good sailor he made up his mind that the easiest way to get through the time between the present and his discharge from the schooner was to go at his work as cheerfully as he could, and not count the days as they passed.

The weather kept quite fine for that part of the world, and by nightfall the *Ione* was well away from that rugged mountain in the sea and creeping steadily along towards the last calling place, from whence she was to return to Cape Town. But Jemmy could not help a feeling of dismay when he heard his shipmates discussing with the skipper plans for remaining at Gough Island several weeks in order if possible to make up for what so far had been an unprofitable voyage. He had no desire for any more adventures of that kind, not being one of that wonderful kind of boys that revel in hardships of all kinds for the sheer fun of the thing. But he had sufficient good sense to say nothing of the discontent, and to hope for the best. And as if their hard experience of bad weather had nearly come to an end, the sea kept fairly smooth and the wind not too strong, while its direction enabled them to lay their course direct for the island. They arrived in sight of it on the third day after leaving Nightingale, but to everybody's disappointment too late to land that night.

There was no help for it; they had to heave-to

and wait for the day, for the landing was far too dangerous to attempt at night. And then there came one of those weary times that men engaged in such service must always expect. A westerly gale sprang up before morning; the sea was again running in those giant ridges topped with flying spray, and clouds were flying low down, while the sun by day and the moon and stars by night refused to show their beautiful guiding lights. They drifted, drifted, drifted for three days more, until it seemed to the boy that they would never be able to find the island again. But he noticed that although his shipmates looked rather glum, they did not complain, but put in the long watches patiently, telling interminable yarns of their experiences in all parts of the world, sleeping a good deal, keeping the gear that was left in the best repair that they could, and doing what was possible—it was very little—to replace the loss inflicted upon them in their late accident. One thing interested him very much—the behaviour of the two men they had brought away. All hands were very patient with them, allowing them to do just what they would, which consisted mainly of sleeping and keeping out of sight of the sea. They were evidently of no further use at sea at all. In fact they were looked upon by the hard-working, practical members of the *Ione's* crew as a pair of harmless lunatics who must be humoured, but whom it would be well to get rid of as soon as possible.

It was exactly a week from the time they first sighted the island when they again found themselves close to it in the early dawn, this time with a beautiful day before them and a fine working breeze enabling them to bring the schooner up to the little anchorage in fine style. As they approached, the skipper kept peering through his glasses as if puzzled at something, and at last said, "Boys, it strikes me there is something out of the way going on here. There's ever so many more people here than there ought to be, I know." That set all hands wondering what new hindrance they were going to meet with, and when a boat put off to meet them through the encircling weed, their curiosity rose to almost fever-heat. But they kept it under control until the boat got alongside, and the man in charge, climbing aboard, saluted the skipper heartily with, "Well, old man, I'm glad to see you. I've got a shipload of passengers for ye." "Why, what's the matter now?" replied the skipper. "What ha' ye been doin' this time?" "We hain't been doin' nothin'," said the visitor, as he lit his pipe, "but we've got over fifty people ashore there out of a fine ship as caught fire and drove them all overside. *Monarch* of London, case oil from New York to Shanghai, and ten passengers besides her crew. Just escaped by the skin of their teeth, an' how we've fed 'em I don't know—we're all pretty fine drawn, I can tell you that. Anyhow, I hope you've got plenty provisions

aboard, for you'll need 'em before you get this crowd to the Cape."

For a few minutes the skipper stood and looked at his informant blankly. Evidently the situation was almost too much for him to grasp. He felt that something was wrong with the scheme of things that such persistent bad luck should follow him. At last he spoke. "Jacob," he said, "what with one thing and what with another, this trip of ours touches bottom for misfortune." Then he gave his visitor an outline of the happenings since they left Cape Town, winding up with, "An' now, just as I was hopin' to find a fat lump of freight from you, and to put in a month's good fishin', I've got to make the best of my way back again with a cargo that doesn't pay at all. I'm jolly glad all these poor people are saved, but I do wish they'd ha' got saved some other time. Ah well, it's all in a lifetime I s'pose, but it comes mighty hard on a poor man sometimes."

During the foregoing conversation the skipper had been carefully conning the vessel into the little harbour, and now the crowd on the rocks were plainly visible, as full of excitement they waved their arms to the newcomers. She was soon moored, and the skipper, jumping into the visitor's boat, was pulled ashore, where he was greeted with all the warmth imaginable; for to those poor castaways he came as a deliverer, and besides, as they had seen the

Tom upon her first sighting land, they had suffered much from the long delay. But they could not help feeling surprised that the skipper did not seem to be at all pleased at the privilege afforded him of being the rescuer of all these unfortunate people. He soon supplied the explanation. When the hubbub had subsided he said, "Well, good folks, you'll excuse me if I don't feel as happy as you do. I'm always glad to do other people a good turn, but, after all, my men and I have got to get our living, and this affair of yours destroys the only chance we had of making anything like a decent trip of it. We must get away from here as soon as ever we can, for I must leave the provision I've brought with me for these poor chaps—it's the only chance they have of getting fed until we come again next trip—and you'll all have to be on very short allowance until we reach Cape Town. And we get absolutely nothing for losing our voyage except the reward of a good conscience, and hardly that if you come to think of it, because we can't do anything else but take you, even if we were brutes enough to think of such a thing. But that's enough about it; the grievance is off my chest now, and I vote we all buckle to and get the stores and freight transhipped as quickly as possible."

Immediately all hands sprang into violent activity, and almost like a swarm of ants attacking a pile of grain the work was taken in hand. The handling of

the great casks of oil and bales of skins over those rugged rocks and across the heaving stretch of water to the schooner was a work of much severity, but everybody worked with a will and a half, as we say, and before sunset, in spite of the fact that the sealers had a really heavy stock of spoil to send away, the stores for the sealers next season had been landed and the bulk of their hard-won produce was taken on board. Meanwhile Captain Bunce and his men had made an anxious calculation of the quantity of stores still remaining on board, finding that, with strict economy and half allowance for everybody, they could manage to make Cape Town with their fifty additional passengers without much hunger, supposing that nothing very unusual happened. But all agreed that had it not been for the tragedy at Nightingale Island, which made it unnecessary for them to land the usual supplies there, they would have been in great difficulty over this new call upon them.

A restless night succeeded the busy day, for the shipwrecked people, that is. For the poor fellows had suffered much from the exposure in the boats without food after their ship caught fire, and the pains of hunger and thirst; for the time allowed them to escape from that vast mass of blazing kerosene was only just sufficient in which to save their lives. They were a week in the boats, enduring such agonies as we often read about, but, thank God, few of us are called upon to experience. And

when they succeeded in landing upon the island, although their escape was a miracle, the stock of food was so small that they had, as one may say, only just been kept alive. And now it looked as if they were about to return to the land of plenty again, although they knew full well that no easy passage lay before them. No wonder they felt unable to sleep.

At the first streak of day they were all astir and busy getting the rest of the oil on board, toiling to such good purpose that at noon the *Ione's* anchor was aweigh, and with a light, fitful air from off the cliffs they began to forge ahead out of the little bay. Hearty and affecting were the leave-takings between the rescued men and the entertainers, and many fervent promises were made that if ever it lay in their power they would well reward the good Samaritans. As the schooner glided seaward a great school of humpbacked whales came majestically in from the sea, surrounding the little vessel as if intending to prevent her leaving. The skipper looked longingly at the great animals, representing such a large sum of money if only they could be caught, and bitterly he regretted his not being able to stay and have a go at them. Jemmy was fascinated at the sight, for he had never before seen such a mighty company of sea monsters, and, as they were so close, he could not help feeling a terrified wonder as he imagined what would happen if they chose to

attack! the schooner. But as he saw no anxiety shown by his shipmates he felt that all must be right, and began to enjoy the splendid spectacle of these monarchs of the deep gravely sporting around and drawing closer and closer in to the rocky shores of the island.

Gradually the breeze freshened, the schooner under all sail gathered speed, and the outlines of the grim island faded away in the coming twilight, to the great relief of the passengers, who felt at last they were once more nearing civilisation and coming in touch with the world they had been so long cut off from. They needed all their patience and self-control, for the conditions of life aboard the schooner were very hard. She was so small, that even if she had been in perfect trim as before she lost her bulwarks, &c., the accommodation would have been of the poorest, just a deck passage, and but one degree better than a journey in an open boat; as it was, great care was necessary to avoid falling overboard. Then the wind increased steadily to nearly a gale, and the *Ione* fled before it. Very reluctantly the skipper shortened sail as the seas rose higher and higher, and the drenched and shivering company tried in vain to find shelter about the decks. They could not stay below, because the air had got so foul that they could not breathe it for more than a few minutes at a time. Yet never a word of complaint was heard from the crew of the schooner. All this added hardship and

loss of earnings could not make them forget that they were saving life, and, like true men, they scorned to complain that duty brought them suffering.

But if the weather was bad and made life a misery hardly to be endured, it also meant that they were rapidly reaching their port. And as day succeeded day and the steady push of the storm behind them did not falter, they felt more and more able to bear without complaint their present evils for the joy that was just a little way before them, and even at the worst of times there were to be heard snatches of song and an occasional hearty laugh. And then one morning at daybreak there was a gleeful shout of "Land oh! right ahead." It was a joyful moment, and all the more so because the strong, steady breeze showed no sign of failing; the sturdy little craft swept gallantly on, until just before night closed in she was taken in tow by one of the jackal tugs and snugly berthed in dock.

And, would you believe it, much as those shipwrecked men wanted to get to comfort and a good meal, they did not know where to go. They had no money, and there was no one to whom they could apply. In a foreign port they could have gone to their Consul, but here, under their own flag, they were outcasts indeed. But as so often happens, the Press came to the rescue. A reporter from one of the newspapers seeking some story for his paper

came on board, and learning of their plight, undertook to look after them. He was an energetic youth, and lost no time in making them comfortable in a decent hotel. His paper had plenty of good news to read the next day, and the smart young journalist went up in the estimation of his employers at least ten per cent. for having been able to grasp his opportunity.

Mainly because of this happy chance which made all the story so public the little battered schooner was for a week or more the centre of Cape Town's attractions. The coming and going of the great mail steamers attracted scarcely any attention at all by the side of the doings of this little cock-boat. And what was most gratifying of all, owing to a conversation Jemmy had with the reporter, in which he artlessly told the story of how the skipper and crew would be the losers, to a large extent for them, through their humanity, a subscription was started for them which amounted to £700. This divided among the crew made up more to them than they would have earned in three voyages, and they were of course highly delighted. But it just happened so ; in many cases of the kind the knowledge of having been able to do a good deed has been its own and only reward.

This was almost the most delightful week of Jemmy's whole life. Every right-minded boy has a longing to be a hero of some sort or another, and even if he be not able to do much himself, he

feels it a great thing to have been one of the company that have done great things. There was so much public interest in the doings of the *Ione's* crew, and he was questioned by so many people about those doings, patted on the back by so many fine gentlemen and kissed by so many ladies, that it was a wonder that his young head was not turned. At last one day, when the excitement had quieted down a bit, Captain Bunce, happy and prosperous looking, called Jemmy for a little talk, beginning it by saying, "Well, sonny, and how are you feeling now? pretty good, I expect." Jemmy looked gratefully at his friend, who went on to say, "Now I've got quite a lot of money for you, nearly £50, and I don't quite know what to do with it. I can't expect you to know either, and I mustn't give it to you all in a lump, because you are sure to do something silly with it. You really don't want to spend any of it; you've got plenty of clothes, and I dare say you've had enough tips given you to make a fairly good pay-day by themselves. But it's yours, and I don't want to press you to do anything you don't want. Suppose I put it in the bank for you and get you a ship for home, giving you a paper so as you can draw your money when you get there; would you like that?" Jemmy answered almost immediately, "I haven't got any home, sir, and the only thing I'd like to do with my money would be to give it to Mr. Burney, the mate I told you of, sir, who was so good to me. But I

don't know where he is, and perhaps I shall never see him again."

Captain Bunce smoked in silence for a minute or two, and then said as if still thinking the matter over, "Then I take it you ain't over-anxious to go to England again, as there's nobody there you know. Well, how'd you like to come another trip with us to the islands?" Jemmy's face fell, and he stammered faintly, "I—I'd like fine to be along with you, sir, but I don't like the islands. It's always so stormy and so cold and miserable, and I feel so sorry all the time for the poor fellows that work so hard, and live so hard, and get scarcely nothing for it after all, that it keeps me miserable all the time. I like you all so much, that I'd like to see you all doing well instead of always being so poor. But I'll come with you whenever you like, sir, and perhaps as I get bigger and stronger I shan't notice the hardships so much."

The skipper's face lit up as he slipped off his seat on to his feet and said cheerily, "All right, Jemmy, you shan't go back to them islands again; you shall come with me as you want to. Come here," and stepping ashore he led Jemmy around the dock until they came to a beautiful barquentine of about 300 tons that looked as if she might be some gentleman's grand yacht. And going on board followed by Jemmy he led the way into her sumptuous cabin, which reminded Jemmy of the *Samaritan*, so fine were all its appointments.

Bidding Jemmy be seated, Captain Bunce with a smile of triumph remarked to his young follower, "Now see here, Jemmy, I'm skipper of this ship. We're bound to a lovely part of the world on a quite romantic expedition, and you shall come."

CHAPTER XI

FOR several minutes Jemmy sat and stared quite stupidly at the skipper. The invitation was such a surprise that he felt hardly able to take it in. You see, he was very fond of Captain Bunce, but he cordially detested the journey that he felt sure the *Ione* would be making again. At the same time he would have gone rather than left the man he so much admired. And now in this sudden way he saw all that he would have wished his friend and himself suddenly fulfilled, and of course he felt a bit dazed and overcome. But pulling himself together he said simply, "I'm very glad, sir, and I think I'm very lucky. I thought this was a beautiful craft before, but now I feel that she is wonderful. She is even better than the *Samaritan*, for she's got no nasty engines to make her dirty." "Now, Jemmy boy," warned the skipper, "don't go and talk like that. Only fools and old sailors give themselves away in that fashion about steam at sea. I'm a sailor, and have never been in steam but twice in my life, but I know very well that steam has been the greatest blessing the sailor ever had. It has done away with half his hardships at one blow, and while it certainly doesn't

leave him as much room as before to show the kind of stuff he is made of, it doesn't make him a bit less of a man."

Of course all this was Greek to Jemmy, who was only repeating without thinking what he had heard said by men who ought to have known better, and therefore it did not make much impression on his mind, especially as Captain Bunce went on to say, as if still on the same subject, "We're sailing the day after to-morrow for the sunny islands of the Pacific, the place where old sailors go to be turned into happy sea-birds when their hard times on board ship are over." Jemmy stared at his chief uncomprehendingly, which is a long word to express a state of mind which even the oldest men find themselves in now and then. But he said nothing, having learned that when you don't understand a thing, if you keep your eyes and ears open and wait you are almost certain to know all you want to very soon.

For the next few minutes they sat in silence. Then suddenly Captain Bunce said, "Now, Jemmy, you've got no more time to waste. Go and fetch your dunnage (sailor term for clothes) aboard, and say good-bye to the little *Iona*." Jemmy jumped to his feet, answering, "Aye, aye, sir," and trotted off in a high state of excitement, as well he might. In ten minutes he was back on board the schooner packing up. Another quarter of an hour saw him ready to go, and then came

the trying time, for he was born with an affectionate disposition, and could not be associated with a cat or a dog for even a few hours without feeling a pang of parting with them. So he went round to such of his shipmates as were on board to say good-bye, and was quite broken down to find how much they liked him, how sincerely they wished him every success, and he was quite puzzled to find how little he was able to tell them of his immediate prospects. That he was going to the Pacific in a fine barquentine with Captain Bunce he knew, but exactly where in that vast ocean and what for he knew no more than they did. But we know of course, so we must let the secret out.

There were in Cape Town four young men, whom we will call for the present Messrs. Smith, Jones, Brown, and Robinson. They all had plenty of money, and were all very fond of adventure. They had grown very tired of the paltry pursuit of so-called pleasure at home, and were roaming about the world together, ready for any good game that might present itself—the more dangerous the adventures, the better. And while in Cape Town they had come across an old skipper who interested them very much, he was so full of yarns of out-of-the-way corners of the world that could be reached with a ship. One night as they sat up late talking about all things one could possibly imagine, the old man dreamily drifted into a long tale of hidden treasure, of lonely seas

and desert islands where no man ever comes; of great ships losing their way and being wrecked, with only a couple of hands saved to share the spoil of a broken-up ship. From a general, aimless sort of conversation he gradually came to particulars, and then they found that for years this old seaman had cherished the idea that one day he would be able to sail direct to the treasure caves left by those hapless wanderers, and entering into possession of their hoard, return to England and become a country gentleman, with a great house and land, and bowing peasants to greet him as the squire. And here he was at seventy years of age almost penniless, but not hopeless, for hope in some men never dies until they are dead themselves.

The young men heard all his story, and it so fired their imagination that after he had left them they decided that if it were possible they would buy a vessel and go a-sailing under his guidance to see if they could find the place of which the old man spoke with such serene confidence. And it so happened that the *Sirius*, the barquentine before mentioned, lay in dock awaiting a purchaser, her owner having tired of her after but a short experience, and laid her up for sale, while he went back to his Piccadilly and a life of inglorious ease and so-called pleasure. They were not long in making their bargain, and then hearing of Captain Bunce's exploits, they sought him

out and engaged him as captain, giving him full instructions and a free hand to engage the crew, only stipulating that they should be all British; for they had an old-fashioned faith in the goodness of their own countrymen, and were disgusted at the latter-day idea that Britain was done for and her children no longer of any use, in which I hope you will agree with them.

The fitting out of the ship, rearranging her accommodation, &c., was to these fine young fellows a stupendous lark, and every suggestion made by Captain Bunce was received by them with a fresh burst of enthusiasm, a feeling not at all shared in by their old friend and mentor, Captain Vance. But as Smith, the elder of the party, said, "Poor old Johnny, he's thought so much about treasure that he can't think about anything else. An' he's got past the age of enjoying himself. We haven't, thank God, and if there's any fun to be got out of this trip, we're going to have it, treasure or no treasure. What do you say, boys?" The responses were rather confusing, because all three spoke at once, but as they all said the same thing, only in different ways, it didn't matter very much. It was to the effect that they were with Smith all the way, that Captain Bunce was a jolly good fellow, and that sport, the kind of sport promised them, was the principal object of life to them now.

They bought everything in the way of fishing

tackle—harpoons, granes, guns, and ammunition—that Captain Bunce so much as mentioned, that is, as far as was possible in Cape Town. At last the skipper laughingly protested that he would not say another word about the possibilities of sport, or they would want another ship to carry the equipment. But one of the young fellows replied that he had sampled everything in the way of sport ashore from shove-hapenny to rhinoceros-shooting, and now they had so fired their ideas as to the chances of sport at sea, that they were going to give the thing the fairest possible trial. Woe betide him if the reality did not come up to his glowing descriptions! They proposed, if that was the case, to turn buccaneers or pirates, and the first thing they intended to do was to emulate Captain Sharkey in Conan Doyle's delightful story, and lashing him, Captain Bunce, to the main deck capstan, pelt him with bottles until he died. The skipper looked serious for a moment as the horror of such a deed sank into his mind, and then glancing at the glowing face of his boyish interlocutor, burst into a hearty laugh, for he realised how far removed from the very idea of cruelty was its every line.

But I am quite neglecting Jemmy. Never since he left Liverpool in the *Rosamund* had he enjoyed himself so much. He lived in a perpetual whirl of excitement, for the pranks of those big boys—the owners were scarcely more—were end-

less. And they took a great fancy to Jemmy, who for some queer reason, which I don't pretend to understand, was not to be spoiled. He was always respectful, always happy, and always willing. There didn't seem to be a streak of meanness in him, and as for lies, he had no occasion for them, they didn't occur to him. I don't want to represent him as a model boy or a prig, but he was essentially a fine little chap, and had none of those dirty little tricks about him that do so spoil some otherwise fine lads. In some mysterious way, principally from his having been thrown among the right sort of people, he seemed to know exactly what the things were "that a fellow can't do, you know," and so, although the spirit of mischief was strong in him, he made himself liked. And Captain Bunce kept a watchful eye on him, lest at any time he should be tempted to take advantage of his position. The young men called him the commodore, and gave him all sorts of encouragement, but he kept his head and went on learning almost without knowing that he was doing so.

The day of sailing had been fixed as the skipper had informed him, but it was put off for one reason or another for a week later, until one beautiful morning the *Sirius*, with a crew of twenty-five British seamen, two smart young officers, one from the *Worcester* and one from the *Conway*, who had served their time in sailing-ships, and

had taken their master's certificates, had been shipped as chief and second mates, and the big Englishman from the *Ione*, who had shipped as boatswain, was towed out of dock and started on her adventurous voyage. Everybody was in a high state of satisfaction and enjoyment, for everybody felt that they were going to have a glorious time, that this expedition would be far and away better than privateering or pirating could possibly be. They only towed as far as the breakwater end, then with the smartness of yacht sailors the sails were set, the tug slipped, and the beautiful *Sirius* under all sail bowed gracefully to a leading wind and sped away southward to round the grim Cape.

Everything about the decks were soon secured and watches set, the men settling down soberly into their respective positions, and when the cry of supper was raised all hands except those employed actually at the wheel and look-out went to their meal, finding to their astonishment all that they had so long wished for as seamen. Their living place—I must call it a foc's'le, although it was nothing like the usual place called by that name on board ship—was clean, bright, and airy; there was a table and benches to sit upon, a cloth laid with knives and forks, and spoons and plates, just as good as the third-class passengers would have in a Cunard ship. There was a place to dry wet clothes, and lockers to put their things

in, as well as plenty of hooks to hang things up, and there was a man to attend to the keeping of everything in order. He was a Chinaman, called You Sing, who had been a steward and knew his work thoroughly, which was a good job for him. And the food was not merely of good quality, but was well cooked, and served as if to men, not flung to them as if they were animals, as so many of them had been used to. No wonder that when they came below and found this state of things awaiting them they instinctively looked for a place to wash and tidy themselves up. They found that too, for although she was only a sailing vessel, and therefore could not carry an unlimited supply of fresh hot water, there was a cosy little wash-place handy for all, with a caution printed up to be careful with the water, as of course was necessary. So, well pleased, they all sat down to their good and comfortable supper, feeling satisfied that this was going to be the most pleasant cruise any of them had yet made.

At four bells (six o'clock), the close of the first dog-watch, the wind had risen to half a gale, and the *Sirius* was giving them a taste of her quality, going under all sail, and with the wind free, a good thirteen and a half knots. But it was no purpose of either the owners or the captain to drive her, for there was no hurry, and all hands were called to make her snug for the night. My, it was worth something to see those fellows spring to the work,

to see how they hauled on the gear, not as if they were afraid of breaking anything, but as if they wanted to get the work done. And when the sails were hauled down and clewed up, how good to see the way they sprang aloft to the task of furling. Be sure that Jemmy was among them, for he had early taken a delight in sail-handling, which indeed is a fine exercise when there are enough of you to perform it, but a cruel struggle when short-handed, as is usually the case.

In half-an-hour she was snugged down to a reefed fore-topsail, reefed foresail, reefed main-sail, mizen- and fore-topmast-staysail, and ready for any weather short of a tremendous gale. Under this reduced canvas she sped along quite comfortably, hardly taking any water aboard, and fairly delighting everybody by her charming ease and grace. The four co-owners, clad in rough tweeds, romped about full of glee, while old Captain Vance, seated in a deck chair by the wheel, looked benevolently at them, like an old cat with a lot of fine kittens playing about her. Then it was suddenly discovered that among the fellows forward there was a fiddler and a concertina player, each with a fine lot of songs and dances, and soon the splendid sound of manly voices joining in old familiar choruses was heard bidding defiance to the roar of wind and sea. Oh yes, she was in the words of the old sea-chanty "a bully ship and

a bully crew, and they were the boys to put her through."

But it must not be supposed that with all this fun and jollity there was any slackness of discipline. That would have spoilt all, and besides, it would have proved that Captain Bunce was not fit for the important position he had attained to through sheer merit. No, a good watch was kept, a careful course steered, and every man on board felt that his particular life was quite safe under the charge of a man who placed duty first. And so the dark, stormy night closed in, the gloomy, lowering clouds settled down, the boisterous waves raged higher and higher, and the insistent wind screamed through the bare rigging, while the warmly clothed, well fed, and contented crew slept serenely, or went about their duties in satisfied ability, full of hope and quiet happiness.

Morning broke upon a wild scene of strife between the wind and the waves, but there were occasional glimpses of the sun. And as soon as an observation showed that it could be safely done, the beautiful craft was kept away with a little more sail set, sending her flying past the pitch of the Cape. The pretty little Cape pigeons and stormy petrels came around as usual to keep her company; but when the youngest of the owners, Robinson, proposed to get up the fowling-pieces and try some shooting, Captain Bunce pleaded for the birds. He said that he wasn't superstitious, but

that he did not see what good end could be served by destroying those beautiful little friends of sea-faring men. They were not good to eat, even if they could be got after killing them; and it seemed such a pity to deprive the lonely sea of its feathered citizens, who did no harm, and gave an additional charm to its wild wastes. And the owners, good fellows that they were, agreed that they wouldn't hurt anybody's feelings by shooting at the sea-birds, much to everybody's satisfaction and their own.

Four days of this wild flying before the gale ensued, during which the *Sirius* was being edged northward a little, so as to get out of the track of the severest of the westerly winds, as there was no need for hurry. Gradually the weather became finer. The sky cleared, and at last both sea and sky put on their brightest, clearest blue; the wind dropped almost to a calm, and the *Sirius* rolled lazily to the long westerly swell. By this time the young owners were becoming anxious for some fun of a new kind. They went in for all manner of gymnastic exercises, boxing, wrestling, fencing, to keep, as Brown put it pathetically, their fat down, for, what with their high living and a narrow area for moving about in, they were in great danger of putting on too much flesh. Then suddenly, out of the blue emptiness, as it appeared, around, there came a splendid host of fish, huge creatures glittering in armour of silver

and gold, leaping into the sunlight, flashing under the keel, and showing in every wonderful movement the rejoicing fulness of life. The four young men stood and watched them, fascinated by the sight, until Captain Bunce said quietly, "Gentlemen, those are albacore, the king mackerel; they'll give you such sport as no salmon ever could, for it would take half-a-dozen of the largest salmon to make one of them. If you'll get out your rods and heaviest tackle, I'll heave-to and give you a chance to try your skill."

"Right oh!" they all shouted at once, and rushed off to get their gear, while the skipper gave his orders to clear away a couple of boats. Fortunately everything was carefully and methodically stowed away, so that it was only a few minutes before the young men, in jerseys and flannel trousers, reappeared ready for the fishing. Under Captain Bunce's direction they chose the biggest and most silvery of their flies, and embarked, two in each boat. The boats were quietly lowered after the vessel hove-to. A few gentle strokes of the oars, and the boats were clear of her. Then the great game commenced. Jemmy, having no special duty, ran aloft, and, perched in the mizen cross-trees, watched the proceedings. He saw the lines fly out, the silvery bait kiss the water; saw the amazing rush of the giant fish, heard the song of the reel as the line flew out. He held his breath at the skill with which the rods

were handled; gasped in sympathy as the rush of the fish, which could not be checked, snapped the line like a piece of thread, and wondered how it could be possible to secure so mighty a fish upon such a slender line. And in his youthful wisdom he decided that it was sheer folly to try and hold such enormous fish with such slender tackle, knowing nothing of the skill of the angler.

Three lines indeed did snap one after the other, but the fourth, held by Mr. Smith, was so carefully handled that, do what the big fish would, he could not get a snapping strain upon it. He dived into the depths, he soared into the air, he rushed along the foaming surface like a living torpedo, but—he could not get away; that slender hook fastened in his jaw and that faithful line remained to keep him from freedom. And at last, utterly wearied, he lay resting his enormous sinews, and not heeding the steady, gentle strain upon his head, which was bringing him ever nearer the hateful boat. Nearer and nearer he drew, while the heart of his opponent thumped with excitement. Then came the sudden flash of energy, one mighty swerve of his broad golden tail, and away he sped, while the reel sung loudly the song of departure. It was a splendid rush, but it finished just before the last two or three yards had run out, and the gallant fish, owning himself beaten, came gently back alongside the boat.

So wearied was he, that he gave no kick while four strong hands flung nooses round his body, and parbuckled him in; but when he felt the hard planks of the boat against his body he gave such an exhibition of energy, that for a while it was doubtful whether the crew would not have to take to the water and leave him in sole possession. But it was his last effort. With one long quiver he died, and with a feeling of triumph, such as only those can experience who have come victorious through the hardest battle, the exultant fishermen returned to the ship, greeted by the deafening cheers of all hands, none of whom had ever beheld such a bit of sport before.

The capture was hoisted on deck in all its glory, and every one gathered round to wonder and admire. But the successful fisherman, Mr. Smith, had a grief that could not be consoled. He wanted to keep this glorious victim of his skill for exhibition at home, for he said it would make even the majestic tarpon in the Strand fishing-tackle shop window look ashamed of its insignificance. But it was impossible; they had no means of preserving it, and so Mr. Smith had to be content with a photograph taken by one of his friends representing him standing by the side of his huge catch, holding the rod. "And that," he said, "will be scoffed at by all my friends at home as a fake photo—they'll never believe it."

They were now well out of the range of the rough

westerly winds, and edging up towards the steady, kindly south-east Trades. The weather was persistently fine, and there was so much good feeling on board, making itself evident in all sorts of fun and amusement, that the time flew by, and Jemmy was perfectly happy, until they came upon an Italian vessel, bound to Japan, whose voyage from England had been one long series of misfortunes. She lay helplessly tossing upon the easy sea almost a wreck, with her ensign drooping from the gaff upside down, which is the sign of utmost distress. No sooner had this been made plain, than all hands were in a state of highest excitement to get to her, to get on board and see what was the matter. The *Sirius* sailed so fast in the light breeze that it took but a very short time (seeming terribly long to the anxious ones on board either ship) before the two vessels came close together. A boat was lowered, and hastily pulled alongside the stranger. There they found a wan and hollow-eyed handful of men gazing wistfully at them, and only able to tell them in broken English that they were dying of scurvy. Their provisions were bad to begin with, but they had been a terribly long time out from home, and now they had not only rotten food, but worse water; rats had got into it and poisoned it. Five of their number had died, and the remaining sixteen were too weak to handle the ship in even that fine weather, while the weather they

had experienced had made the wreck of her now visible. And this Heaven-sent *Sirius* was the first vessel they had seen for over six weeks, at the beginning of which they had felt they could not bear much more.

CHAPTER XII

THIS meeting almost drove the young owners crazy with delight, for they belonged to that large and happy class of mankind who have discovered for themselves that the greatest joys in life are found when we are doing other people kindnesses. How they worked and laughed and joked as the provisions and fresh water were being carried aboard; how tenderly they tried in curious forms of speech to make the poor scurvy-stricken Italians understand that it would be all right now. But so did the fine crew of the *Sirius* likewise. They did their heavy work of helping the distressed men with double sympathy, for they knew well how easily the lot of their suffering fellow-seamen might have been their own. For three days the *Sirius* and the *Giuseppe B.* lay close together, while the crew of the yacht toiled till they almost dropped with fatigue to get the poor Italian seaworthy again. And it was a task: sails, masts, rigging were all in so deplorable a condition, that it took all the seamanship that Captain Bunce and his crew were masters of, aided by the bulk of their boatswain's stores, to patch her up again. But the poor fellows whom they had saved, under

the influence of the good food and flowing sympathy, picked up amazingly, and by the third day they were laughing and singing as if they hadn't a care.

On the fourth morning the two vessels parted, the *Sirius* much lighter and the owners much richer for having expended between two and three hundred pounds in the truest of all charity. The grateful Italians bade them farewell with many tears and fervent blessings, telling one another that it was only another proof of what good fellows the English were, and how often they had proved it before in their benevolence to Italy; while Jemmy thought wonderingly, "Is this paying back some of the debt I owe to those good fellows who saved Mr. Burney and me from drowning and were so kind to us afterwards?" And as the *Sirius*, with all her beautifully fitting sails drawing, glided away, Jemmy looked wistfully after the Italian vessel, his eyes full of tears and his heart full of thankfulness that his ship had been able to come to the rescue in time. With the exception of a few bonito and dolphin, lovely fish, giving plenty of sport, as they crossed the Indian Ocean, they had no more adventures. They scarcely saw a ship, for the two or three that they did see were hull down on the horizon. And they sped along so swiftly that they had no time even to make out what those wanderers were. The young men were becoming impatient to get

into the romantic waters of the great Southern Sea, and to land on some of those wonderful islands of whose beauty and charm they had heard so much. So that it was with great joy they heard one morning at daybreak the cry of "Land on the weather-bow." There was a race of the young owners aloft to see this the first of those wonderful islands of the Far East off which they had arrived. Captain Bunce smiled quietly at their enthusiasm, and turning to the old captain, who usually sat smoking on the quarter-deck, he said, "If they feel so eager over poor old Christmas Island, what will they say to some of the South Sea spots?" "Christmas Island," murmured the old seaman, "oh, that recalls a tale I once heard, but never believed, of a great fleet of Malay pirate craft which, after having had a career of terrible rapine in the Indian Archipelago, chased two merchantmen, large China ships, right out through the straits of Sunda and got caught in a hurricane. Their intended victims escaped, for they were big seaworthy ships, but the whole of the pirate craft were driven ashore, and every one of the villains met a sudden and well-deserved fate. The fellow who told me had a long yarn about their being fairly loaded with valuables, all of which lay in shallow water in a small unsheltered bight of which he knew the exact position, and intended some day to visit and make himself rich beyond his wildest dreams.

"But I knew him for a worthless rascal, and having found out that he never told the truth except by accident, I was only amused by his fantastic tale. And when he wound up by trying to sponge on me for a few dollars, I drove him away, and dismissed the matter from my mind. Ah," he went on dreamily, "he may have been telling truth for once, who knows? I have heard so many tales of the kind that I hardly know how to sift the true from the false. Still, I hope the boys, bless their hearts, won't want to stop here and rummage around. I do want to get on to where I know there is treasure to be found. For, quiet as I sit here day by day, no one knows how I am eaten up with impatience to get to my journey's end. I am getting so old that I am afraid of not living to see the fulfilment of my hopes."

Just then the four owners came sliding down the backstays, and running aft, cried all together, "Come, skipper, haul her up. We want to have a run ashore. It'll be such a treat to get a little sport. Any land'll do after nearly a month at sea, pleasant as it has been." "All right, gentlemen," gravely answered the skipper, "I'm at your orders." And stepping aft, he shouted, "Lee fore-brace! Trim the yards, Mr. Symons, and flatten in the sheets, we're going to try and fetch the land. Get your ground-tackle ready, for if the wind holds we should be able to anchor before

dark." For the next few minutes all hands were very busy, and when they had finished trimming her up it was found that she headed straight for the land, and was raising it at the rate of eight knots an hour.

While the crew were busy preparing the vessel for anchor, the young owners were full of excitement, getting up rifles and fowling-pieces, and all sorts of hunting gear, for none of them knew what game they might meet with, nor was there a book on board containing any information on the subject. But they didn't care; in fact, they felt a great delight at being about to land upon a perfectly unknown shore where, for anything they knew, there might be lions, tigers, rhinoceros, or any other fearful wild-fowl. They could not understand why their old friend and adviser looked so glum, and he would not tell them, feeling that as they were paying for everything they had by far the best right to do as they liked without any attempted hindrance from him.

So with utmost impatience they saw the dim outlines of the island become clearer and more definite as they gradually drew nearer. Such was their interest that they could hardly obey the call of the stewards to luncheon, healthy as their appetites were, until they remembered that the meal would certainly pass away the time. Then they all went below with a rush, and fell upon their food with great zest. But before they had

half finished, a quarter-master came down and, saluting, said, "The chief officer's compliments, gentlemen; there's a school of whales a-cruisin' all round the ship, an' he thought p'r'aps you'd like to know." With a regular war-whoop all of them leapt to their feet and rushed on deck, everything else forgotten in their desire to see those monsters of the deep at close quarters. They had been unfortunate in that respect hitherto. When they reached the deck and looked over the side they drew a long breath of admiration, for all around them in companies and ranks moved majestically hundreds of the great creatures, apparently taking no notice of this strange visitor to their favoured haunts.

Now they were torn between two opinions, two desires. They wanted very badly to go whaling, and just as much to get ashore. They appealed to the captain whether it would be possible to have a go at the whales, and get ashore that night as well. And the captain said no, they must either choose one or the other, they could not have both. So that didn't help them much. But the leader of the party came to the rescue, as indeed he usually did, saying, "Well, boys, as we're in doubt I suggest we toss for it as we do at cricket, heads whaling, tails shore." "Good man," they replied enthusiastically, "good old Smith always helps us out. Spin her up," and the coin, flipped upward, fell on deck, head up. The captain, who

had been watching and knew his employers very well by this time, immediately gave orders to get up the whaling gear and shorten sail. The men were bewildered at this sudden change, but as they said, it was no business of theirs. So just as they had bestirred themselves to get the ship ready for anchoring, now they hurried to prepare the gear for a day's sport with the big sea game.

In twenty minutes from the time the first order was given the two boats were ready with their bow harpoon guns and lines. The ship was hove-to, the boats were lowered, and with hearts beating hard with the tremendous excitement of the moment, the bold sportsmen were being rowed toward the unconscious monsters, the skipper in charge of one boat, and the boatswain handling the other. Jemmy, in spite of his earnest plea that he might be allowed to go, was left behind. Alas! the game was a very brief one. With the exception of the skipper and the boatswain, none of them had any experience of this great sport, and it could hardly be expected that they would go into it with the same coolness as professional whalers. So although they did their best to get the boats in a position to attack the whales, they could not do so. They did not row quietly enough for one thing, and the whales hearing them coming got scared, putting on such speed as to leave them hopelessly behind, and after an hour's hard work the skipper said, "Gentlemen, we'll have to give

it up. Those whales can give us two fathoms to our one. They'll be over the edge of the horizon long before we've got tired out, and that won't be very long either, judging from what I can see."

It was hard and disappointing in the extreme, but they were all sensible fellows in spite of their eager youth, and they knew that their good skipper would not have spoilt sport for a trifle. So after a moment's despondency they brightened up and replied cheerily, "All right, captain; hey for the good old lugger and a pleasant passage to the whales. We couldn't have done anything with them anyhow, and so we'll be glad they got away."

A few minutes was sufficient to get the boats alongside again, hoisted and secured, and then all hands turned to with a will to get all sail on the ship. It was beautiful to see the white wings spread and the beautiful vessel bounding forward on a wind like a high-mettled horse at a touch of the spur. So short had been the interval of whale-chasing, that the skipper was able to promise that given ordinary good fortune in finding an anchorage, they would be snugly moored before dark. And so it was. By four o'clock they were well up with the land, and coasting along it before the wind, soon discovered a pretty little bay well sheltered from the prevailing winds. They ran in sweetly, rounded to, and dropped anchor in man-o'-war style, which really depends upon having plenty of hands to carry out the orders given almost as much as upon the

skill of the captain. The sails were furled smartly and the decks cleared up, and the *Sirius* lay anchored as peacefully as if she had been moored for a week.

Of course the young men were mighty anxious to get ashore at once. But Captain Bunce pointed out to them that only about another hour of daylight remained, and as they were in an entirely wild and unknown spot, it would be foolish to attempt any excursion before morning. Better far to devote the present time to fishing and proceed in their quest of adventure at daybreak. Again good humour and good sense carried the day, and with great glee all kinds of fishing-tackle was rigged for what proved a splendid evening's sport. I have always noticed in out-of-the-way tropical harbours, such as this one was, that given the right time of day and one fresh fish for bait, some of the best rough fishing in the world may be had. It isn't the high art of angling, though that may be found too, but the fish are not shy, the varieties are many, and the consequent fun and excitement are great. This happened to be one of the two best times of the day, sunrise and sunset, and as for bait—well, one of the men was fortunate enough to foul-hook a fish that was nosing around the piece of pork that he had on his hook. He hauled it on board, it was immediately cut up for bait and distributed, and in five minutes every one was hauling up fish as fast as they could, fish ranging from the little mackerel-

like cavallé to huge creatures of a hundred pounds in weight. It was a regular carnival of fishing, and all the more delightful because of the uncertainty as to what they were going to catch next. By the time the sun had reached the horizon, the main-deck was a sight to behold, more like a tropical fish market than anything else, and the display would have gladdened the heart of a naturalist. Then came the brief twilight and sudden darkness; the biting of the fish stopped as if by some mysterious signal, and with a general sigh of satisfied pleasure everybody rolled up their lines, put them away, and remembered that they were extraordinarily ready for supper. After supper, music (fiddle, banjo, and concertina) and song until ten o'clock, then all, except the anchor watch, made for bed, to sleep and dream of wonderful doings to-morrow.

Before the violet of the night sky was streaked with the lovely streamers of colour which usher in the dawn of those regions all hands were astir, full of eagerness to see what the day would bring forth. Every man had his own fund of expectation to draw upon, though none knew with any certainty what was likely to happen. But that didn't matter at all; they felt ready for anything, from tiger-hunting to unearthing pirates' treasure-hoards, or even diving for them if there was any need. The usual light refreshment of coffee and biscuit was taken at daybreak, and as the daylight came two boats, fully equipped with arms

and ammunition, with the four owners and the old captain divided between them, and a dozen picked men of the crew in charge of the two mates, pulled for the shore, the skipper preferring to remain on board. Jemmy looked wistfully after them, but he had not been invited to go, and somehow felt that Captain Bunce would not let him go if he asked permission.

But he had his reward shortly afterwards, for no sooner had the party reached the shore and landed than the skipper called the boatswain, and told him to prepare the gig for launching. When she was ready, the skipper ordered the boatswain to make a thorough examination of the harbour for any sign of a sunken wreck. Then, turning to Jemmy, he said, "Now then, my boy, if you'd like to go along with the boatswain, you may. And keep a sharp look-out; your young eyes may pick up something that the men miss." Joyfully, Jemmy thanked the skipper, and jumped into the boat with the smartness of a monkey. They pushed off, and with an easy stroke glided over the smooth waters of the bay. Then, at the orders of the boatswain, the men shipped their oars, and, taking each a paddle, sat on the gunwale of the boat, slowly propelling her and gazing earnestly down into the clear depths beneath them.

They had nearly made the circuit of the bay when a shrill cry from Jemmy of "What's that, sir?" made all the paddles stop. "What do you

see, boy?" inquired the boatswain. "There, sir," gasped Jemmy; "that great black lump there, pointing out upon the starboard side of the boat." She was turned and headed for the spot to which Jemmy was pointing, and there, sure enough, lay something a good distance down, but showing like a huge rock that had been dropped upon the almost smooth bottom. The boat's way was stopped, and six pairs of eager eyes gazed earnestly downward to see if this object was worth exploring, or if it was only a rock, such as is often found on the bottom of otherwise clear harbours. After a long scrutiny the boatswain decided that the object looked sufficiently like the hull of a sunken vessel to warrant a closer investigation, and, taking careful bearings of the spot with the boat's compass, he made all haste back to the ship.

Arriving on board, he reported to the skipper (giving Jemmy full credit for having first sighted the object, whatever it was). After hearing him out, the skipper decided upon warping the vessel closer to it, and a kedge (small anchor) with a stout rope attached was at once run out to the spot and dropped. Then the anchor was weighed, and the ship hauled in by the kedge until she was right over the spot, and there she was carefully moored. The diving gear was now brought up and rigged, and Jemmy saw with intense interest a man dressed up in the wonderful rig of

a diver. Saw the great helmet, with its goggle-eyes, put over his head and screwed to the plate on his shoulders; saw the air-pipe attached and the signal line placed in his hand, and then quietly, as into a lower room, the strange figure descended the long ladder placed for him, while the pump slowly revolved, sending down to him the essential air, without which in one minute he would be dead.

The bubbles of used-up air rose to the placid surface as the diver descended, and his course along the bottom could easily be marked by them, although he could not be seen. The time seemed terribly long to the watching, wondering boy; he felt strangely full of sympathy for his shipmate, placed, as he thought, in a position of such terrible danger, when suddenly he saw the attendant men hauling gently upon the line and pipe, and the diver rose to the surface and climbed up the ladder. Heavily he mounted to the deck, where ready hands received him, and immediately unscrewed the front of his helmet. And as they busied themselves with the fastenings which held the great copper globe to his collar, the skipper, standing close to the diver's face, heard him say, "It's a wreck, sure enough, sir; a country craft, an' I think there's two or three more there. They're all huddled up in a heap like. I didn't stop to look inside them, because I thought you'd like to know as we was right in supposin' they was vessels.

But I'll go down again, sir, as soon as I've had a bit of a rest (I'm a little out o' practice), and I'll find out whether there's anything there or not."

The skipper listened intently and only answered, "All right, my lad; when you've had your spell, go ahead again." Then he turned away and went to his cabin, leaving the diver to go forward and be assailed with questions by his shipmates as to what it was like down there. But to all their questions he gave short answers, being one of those men whose strong point is deeds, not words. So presently they left him alone and went about their various duties, snatching a brief glance occasionally at the calm waters beneath them, where there might be something found that would yield them all a good pay-day. No thought of pay bothered Jemmy, yet he was probably the most elated of them all. In fancy he saw himself being praised as the discoverer of many bags and boxes of gold and jewels, whose value, like that of a Monte Cristo treasure, varied from thousands to millions of francs or doubloons or pounds—anyhow, it would be an uncountable lot, and he, he would be the hero of this great discovery. No wonder his head swam and his face flushed, and he imagined quite impossible things as the outcome of his latest adventure.

The diver having recruited his strength now appeared again, and signified his readiness to go on with his work. There was no need to call

the assistants; they were ready, not only willing but anxious to begin work again. And he, the centre of all their regards at the moment, moved with such annoying quietness and deliberation. It didn't seem to occur to him that any one could be in a hurry. They were obliged to curb their impatience until he, the important man, should choose to act. So that it was with a long-drawn sigh of relief that they saw him again slowly descending the ladder into those mysterious depths.

This time it was much longer before the diver signalled to the watchers above that he was coming up, and when at last he did do so, they needed all their self-control to keep from hauling him up too quickly and doing him harm. Slowly he mounted the side, and, stepping on deck, waited while hands trembling with excitement relieved him of his helmet and disclosed his pale face, with the haggard expression which all divers wear upon first reaching the surface. But all he said was, "Help me off with the rig; I want to speak to the captain, private." Hearing this the captain strolled aft to his cabin and awaited the coming of his quiet diver. Many a whispered question that worthy disregarded, preserving a stolid silence and almost driving them wild with impatience. Well, you know how you would be yourself under the same circumstances.

At last he was freed from his leaden boots

and cumbrous suit, and, slouching aft, followed the skipper into his room. When the door was closed, the skipper turned to him and said, "Well, Tom, what about it?" "Cap'n," replied Tom, "that heap down there is three dhows, or praos, or whatever they call these here country craft, an' they're just bung up with plunder. I couldn't get at much, but I see bags full of coin and plate of all kinds. And their holds is full of cases of all shapes and sizes. One thing I can't understand, and that is how, if they've a bin there so long, they ain't all overgrown with weed and coral and shells and stuff like that. Why, except for their bein' rotten so that you can pull the timbers apart as if they was paper, they might almost have sunk yesterday."

"All right, Tom," said the skipper, "you've done a good day's work for yourself and all of us, and now keep your mouth shut until we begin operations. You'll be off all other duty, and you'll get full diver's pay apart from whatever share the owners like to give you. Go now and have a good rest."

"Thankee, sir," answered Tom, and departed, well pleased with his good fortune, and feeling to the full his importance.

Of course, he was bombarded with questions as soon as he got forward, but to all of them he returned evasive answers until he found his ship-

mates quite annoyed with him. But they hadn't time to bother him much, for he had not been forward more than a quarter of an hour before the two boats, which had been ashore all the morning, were seen coming off, and all hands made ready to receive them. They came alongside, and to the wonder of all the waiting men they brought nothing but a few birds and an old goat, while the crew looked tired out and disgusted with their want of success. Not so the owners; they had enjoyed themselves scrambling through the thick jungle and admiring the wonderful plants clustered about so thickly. True, they pronounced it a rotten place for sport, and suggested getting away as soon as possible, until Mr. Smith noticed the change in the vessel's position and the diving gear on deck. Then he turned to the skipper for an explanation at once. And the captain led the way below into the saloon where, amidst a breathless silence, he unfolded the morning's story. He did not finish it though, for the old captain was so excited that he fell forward in a dead faint, and all attention was turned to helping him. The shock of success was too much for his feeble frame.

But as soon as he revived he was more eager than any of them to commence operations. He wanted to see the realisation of his long-put-off hopes, and could hardly be persuaded that it was quite unlikely for any rival expedition to come now and snatch the prize from their very grasp. At last,

however, he saw the reasonableness of waiting until daylight the next morning before entering upon so heavy a task as this was likely to be, and tried to settle down patiently to a restful afternoon and night.

CHAPTER XIII

THAT was a restless night for all hands. There were none among them, from Jemmy upwards, but had dreams of wealth, enormous even to the satisfying of their wildest desires. None of them except the young owners, who were the least concerned of all, had ever known what it was to have more than just enough for their pressing wants, and most of them were painfully acquainted with the sharp pangs of poverty, when every penny means a meal. So they lay about the decks and in their bunks spending the supposed treasures beneath them, according to the freaks of their fancy; for of course, as they really did not know anything, they imagined all the more, until with most the sea-bed under the keel became an Aladdin's cave crammed with gold and jewels. The persons least affected by the general unrest were the owners and Jemmy—they, because they had all they wanted really, since they were sensible young fellows, and saw no fun in the senseless waste so often seen among what we call our gilded youth; and the boy, because he had forgotten how precious a penny used to be to him, and thought of money only as something to give away. He was born un-

selfish, and that in great measure accounts for his happiness, since only those who are unselfish can be really happy.

The night, so long to most of them, passed, and the sweet day broke. Only one needed calling, but calling him was vain. While they were getting their coffee, all hands felt a sudden chill—a sense of something having happened. And soon they knew the reason. The news suddenly spread around the ship that the old captain, whose gentle, quiet ways had endeared him to all, had been found peacefully sleeping his last long sleep. He was dead. The excitement had been too much for his feeble heart, and he had quietly passed away, without seeing the fulfilment of his long-deferred hopes.

There was a grave solemnity about the ship as the preparations for disposing of the poor clay were made. He was wrapped in canvas and laid upon the quarter-deck. All hands came aft and listened intently while Mr. Smith in a broken voice read the beautiful burial service. And then the little white parcel was carefully lowered into a boat, taken outside to the harbour mouth, and sunk in deep water, the grandest grave a man can have. And all hands felt that their old shipmate had obtained a good and quiet release from the heavy storms of his life, and that he was far happier than he would have been if he had lived to share in what they all felt would be their great good fortune, although at

the same time every one wished that he could have lived a little longer.

When the ceremony was over there was a short consultation between Captain Bunce and the owners, the result of which was that the day was declared to be as Sunday, wherein nothing should be done but what each individual felt good, and as the fine young man who was the leader of the party said, "Think upon good things." I don't want you to suppose that these young fellows were angels, because they were not; but they were real good-hearted fellows and full of kindness, which I am inclined to think is better even than being angels in this work-a-day world of ours.

Still there is no use denying the fact that it was a dreary day. We have all got to die, but if we are for ever thinking about it we shan't be able to live properly, and, after all, the business of life is to live. At any rate every one on board was heartily glad when next morning came and all hands turned-to with a will to see what the mysterious deep held for them. Diver Tom was rigged and descended, hoisting gear having been prepared for him to hook on to whatever he might find below. I wish I could make you understand the state of mind of all hands when the first signal came from beneath to "Hoist away." It needed all the authority of the officers to keep the strong crew from being too vigorous. "Easy, easy," was continually being ordered as the men at the tackles pulled. Gradually a great

square box rose to the surface, bumped against the side (it seemed as if it bumped against every man's heart), and rose slowly up until it swung on board and was lowered on deck. The sling was unhooked and cast off, and the sodden shell-encrusted box was seized by half-a-dozen willing hands to shove it aft. But it was too heavy; so a rope was flung round it, and a dozen men started to haul. At the first strain it turned over, and as it fell on its other side it burst asunder, and out from it there rolled a mass of clotted coin, all dingy in colour, so that none could say of what metal it was. The action of the salt water had run it into lumps almost as if it had been in the fire, but there was no mistaking it for anything else but coin. Men's hearts pumped violently, and their mouths went hot and dry at the sight, so fierce is the excitement of finding treasure. For a minute there was danger that the unseen workman below would be forgotten, but Captain Bunce's keen eye detected a tendency to neglect the air-pump, and he shouted, "Mind your diving-gear, lads; there's a life at stake below you!" and ashamed of themselves, the men renewed their attention diligently. Moreover, there were signals from below that the hoisting-gear was needed again, so detailing half-a-dozen men to stow away the treasure, the first officer again had the gear sent down. A very short time elapsed, and another signal was felt to hoist away. Another mass rose to the surface, but this time it was in

three bags, which, as soon as they were lifted out of the water, burst, and their contents, another heap of coin apparently, streamed back into the sea, amid the horrified remarks of the men.

Meanwhile the check-rope was jerking for the sling to be sent down again, but the officer could not face the possibility of such great loss ; and so, hoping that Tom would understand, he ordered a bundle of sacks to be sent down, so that if there were any more bags of coin they might be saved by being poured into the new sacks, and so avoid such enormous waste. But now Tom asked to be hauled up again for a rest, and on reaching the surface informed the captain that there was four or five days' work before him at the present rate of progress. Everybody knows what exhausting work diving is, so great impatience was felt that there were no other men on board fit for the work. Although the present piece of good fortune had just fallen into their laps, as it were, they were already fretting at the slightest delay ; when suddenly one of the young owners, Mr. Jones, came forward, and announced his determination of going down if only Tom would give him a few instructions, which of course Tom was ready enough to do ; and in about half-an-hour the fine young man was descending the ladder weighted down with the massive outfit of the diver. Every one was mighty anxious to be sure until he came again to the surface after having been down twenty minutes, and he was helped off

with his helmet in about the quickest time on record. He was as white as chalk and his features drawn with pain, but his pluck was undiminished, and he insisted upon going down again as soon as he had recovered a bit.

Meanwhile the first haul had been examined, and found to be a mixture of gold and silver coins of various countries and dates, with a few chains and ornaments of gold and silver intermixed with them. The value of the whole heap as far as could be guessed was about two or three thousand pounds. This was not kept secret from the crew, for all hands were called aft and informed of it. And Mr. Smith, standing forward, said, "Now, men, I want you all to know that whatever the amount of treasure we find, it will be divided among us according to rank, my three friends and I only sharing as able seamen. We are not in want of money, and therefore we are not willing to take more than a small share; it is the adventure that we prize; and so I hope you will all work contentedly and happily together without any jealousy. If the treasure that we find should be of great amount, as I hope for your sakes it will be, we will go no farther, but return to Cape Town and divide it. Then those of you who wish can go straight home and retire upon your gains." There was a dead silence for a moment, and then a hearty cheer broke out from the full hearts of the listeners.

Mr. Jones now impatiently signified his intention

of going down again, nor could he be persuaded to allow Tom, who was well rested, to go down and get to work once more. So the young fellow was screwed up again, and down he went, but he had hardly reached the bottom before he gave the signal to be hauled up. It was too much for him, for when he came to the surface he had to be hauled on board an inanimate bundle—he had fainted. In much alarm he was released from his armour and given every attention—not a moment too soon. When he came to, he admitted that he was not cut out for a diver, his heart was not strong enough, and he insisted that Tom was entitled to more than double his share for the cruel strain he was undergoing. Tom grinned appreciatively as he put on the suit again, feeling very well satisfied with his position, and determined to oppose with all his might any suggestion of another volunteer being allowed to try his hand at the job.

Now, it would be tedious to tell of the proceedings of the next week, of the extraordinary mass of curious things brought on board from the wreck of those awful old pirate craft. There was much rubbish of course, much that no doubt had been valuable when stolen from the ships that had been captured—bales of silk, cases of merchandise of all sorts, guns, swords, knives, clothing, all of which were just so much lumber. But it all had to be sorted out, for mingled with these things were

jewels and gold and silver in every imaginable form, for the cargo of those quaint craft was just the accumulation of piracy. And even the least imaginative of the crew could not help thinking of the terrible scenes that must have been enacted before such a mass of treasure was piled together—the ruthless murderings and tortures, the riot of wickedness and cruelty on the part of those long dead scoundrels.

But so quickly do we get used to the strangest things when they are repeated a few times, that presently the romance of the whole thing wore off and the work—for it was heavy work—became as commonplace as the ordinary loading of a ship. Only now and then was there a thrill of excitement as some exceptionally magnificent haul reached the surface, as on the last day but one, when three sacks were hauled up, in which were found a number of small palm-leaf packages full of splendid pearls. These were evidently the proceeds of a raid made by the pirates upon a fleet of pearling vessels on some of the fishing grounds.

At last Tom announced that the three vessels were cleared out, and he could see nothing more to hook on to and send up. And strange though it may seem, everybody was delighted to think that they had got to the end of their task. Like the work of a bank cashier shovelling out gold as if it were sugar, they had grown too familiar with handling treasure to remember its value, and

besides, being sailors, they wanted a change. So there was a general feeling of joy when the order was given to clear up the ship and stow away the treasure. No one knew what the value of the haul was, and of course the wildest ideas, ranging from thousands to millions, were current among the crew as to what their wonderful haul was worth. There were a few even then who regretted that they had been cheated, as they put it, out of their trip to that wonderful, mysterious South Sea, but they hardly dared utter their thoughts, feeling indeed almost ashamed of them.

In the midst of all these stirring events Jemmy had moved almost like one who had no share in them. He was bewildered by the continual talk of gold and silver, and pearls and diamonds. He did what work was given him to do almost like a machine, nobody seeming to take any notice of him. You see he had been accustomed to get more than his share of attention as being the only boy in the ship, and as having had the good fortune to see the wreck first, but lately every one's thoughts seemed to be so taken up with the treasure that he, Jemmy, was inclined to wish that he had never called attention to it. What did thousands of pounds mean to him? Nothing definite at all, for he was of that happy age when enough to eat, plenty of fun, and a nice place to sleep, make up nearly all that is wanted, Let it be set down to his credit, too, that he did not

worry his young head in the least about whether he should have any share in the treasure or not; he was not yet old enough to look ahead, or to be what is called mercenary. So he was really glad to know that the pretty *Sirius* was to be on the move again; he did not care much where, so long as it was somewhere fresh, for all the wonderful places he had already seen only whetted his appetite for more.

He was now a strong, sturdy boy, self-reliant, and well up to all his work, but better than that, he was entirely unspoiled. For one thing he had been wisely treated, not coddled one day and banged about the next, and he had always had the good fortune to be thrown amongst men, not grown-up hooligans, who seem to take an evil delight in corrupting a boy. His lines had indeed fallen in pleasant places, such as seldom fall to the lot of a lad with such a beginning in life. He had also learned his business well. He could knot and splice, sew a seam, and steer a vessel much better than many an old sailor; in fact, except for the matter of strength, which he was picking up every day, he was more useful than half the able seamen one meets with on board ship to-day. Also his education, apart from seamanship, had not been neglected, for he could read and write very well, and besides had got a very fair smattering of navigation. And so he was fairly well furnished with ability to fight his own battles, if only he

had learned how to stand alone. That, however, he had never done. He had always found some one near at hand to advise him, or to keep him from going wrong, so that, good fellow as he was, no one could tell how long he would remain so if he once got adrift on his own hook, as we say. But as there are so many boys and men and women like that, we must not be too hard on Jemmy by imagining that he would go all to pieces if he fell into great temptation, with no one near to whom he could turn for assistance.

But I certainly don't want to preach to you, dear boys, and so let us get back to the business of the *Sirius*, homeward bound from her marvelously successful trip. By the owners' orders Captain Bunce called all hands aft as soon as the ship was ready for sea, and when they were mustered he said, "Men, there can be no doubt that we have shipped a great amount of wealth, but until we get to Cape Town we cannot tell how much each man's share will be. But I have to tell you that whatever the amount may be, it will be divided into a hundred shares, of which sixty will be divided among the seamen and owners in equal parts, and the remaining forty among the afterguard, including the boy, and reckoning the diver with the boatswain for shares in addition to his share as a seaman. Now it is not necessary for me, I hope, to tell you how very generous this offer is, and I hope you will join me

in giving our employers three hearty cheers as a sign of appreciation of their generosity." The cheers were given with immense fervour, and as soon as the noise had subsided Captain Bunce whispered to the mate, who shouted, "Man the windlass." He was answered, and the men went to their task of getting the anchor up full of glee. So heartily did they work, that in less than an hour the [Sirius was outside the harbour, and with sail being rapidly piled upon her was catching the first of the brisk south-east Trade winds which would lead her on a straight course across the Indian Ocean to the coast of South Africa.

Now the daily routine of ship life commenced again, and all hands fell into it, as sailors do immediately upon leaving harbour. Watches were set, and a course made for the Cape of Good Hope. The sky was blue, the sea smooth, and everything looked like a rapid passage. Only Captain Bunce kept a strict watch upon his barometer, for he knew how treacherous and full of danger is that part of old ocean at certain times of the year. As the beautiful craft sped across the wide sea his watchfulness never faltered, and at last, after two or three days, Mr. Smith said jokingly, "Why, captain, you seem to have a very heavy load on your mind. I believe you're worrying about losing the treasure, and if that is so, I shall be sorry we've got it aboard." The skipper turned a smiling face to his employer and replied, "No,

sir, I'm not worrying about the money; that's never been my virtue; I've always been too careless of it. But these are the hurricane months in this part of the world, and though I've been through two of those tremendous storms as a seaman, this is the first time I've ever been responsible for the safety of the ship, and I confess I am a bit anxious about meeting one. As for the *Sirius*, she's as good as they build 'em, and in splendid trim. We've got an excellent crew and the best of gear, and I've no doubt that we shall give a good account of ourselves whatever happens; but still I wish we were well to the southward and westward of the Mauritius, and that's a fact."

While they were talking the other three young fellows drew near, noting the skipper's earnest tones, and as he ceased speaking Mr. Robinson said banteringly, "Why, whatever's the matter, skipper; you look as if you'd found a marble and broke a window. I thought we were all to be as jolly as any fellows could be, coming home like the heroes of Elizabeth's time laden with spoil, only, unlike them, we haven't had to wade through blood to get it. Cheer up, Cap., or I shall think good luck doesn't agree with you, and we'd better wish for a little trouble by way of a change." The skipper turned a benevolent look upon the speaker, and answered, "You are all such dear young fellows (excuse my familiarity) that I hate to say a word or give a look to make the smallest

change in your enjoyment, but the fact is, you haven't got any sense of responsibility. Never mind, perhaps it's just as well, and now if you'll excuse me, I'll go and attend to my duty." And he turned and left them. "Whatever's the matter with skipper, Smith?" queried Brown. "Bit off colour, isn't he?" "No," replied Smith, "but he's got an idea we may meet something terrible in the way of storms, and with all his ability he doesn't seem to have learned that it's unwise to cross a bridge before you come to it. But we mustn't worry him. He's bound to be anxious, and since we haven't got any anxieties, p'raps it's just as well that we've got somebody in charge who'll do the worrying for us. Come, let's have a gymnastic contest. We're all getting too beastly fat for anything." And they started wrestling, boxing, and singlestick as if that were the only business of life.

The next three days were so perfectly lovely that every one on board, including the skipper, could not help being happy. The conditions of life for them were perfect—a beautiful ship, a full feeling of kindness for one another fore and aft, no quarrels—for who could quarrel under such circumstances?—and a golden prospect—why, even the cook, who had never been seen to smile before, wore a look of calm satisfaction with life in general that tempted some of the men to make jokes with him. They expected him to be surly as usual, but

he couldn't be, and he even volunteered a song, "The White Squall," that lugubrious ditty that used to be such a favourite at sea, but which I have always felt should be absolutely forbidden on board ship. When he began, several of them thought that they had made a mistake in asking him to contribute something towards the merriment of the evening, but they let him go on to avoid a quarrel. He had a rich baritone voice and a natural ear for music, so he sang the mournful song splendidly, the shuddering men gathered round him, admiring his talent while hating his choice. Jemmy, especially, hung upon every word, fascinated yet scared beyond expression, for he, as we know, had felt to the full of their truth the bitter words of the chorus, especially the last line, "The bark's engulfed in an ocean grave."

The song ceased, and the skipper's voice was heard saying, "That's enough for to-night, men. Better turn in, the watch below, and try and forget the mournful picture the cook has so obligingly drawn for us." "Aye, aye, sir," answered several voices, and the melancholy cook, well pleased with his effort, made for his bunk, to sleep in peace, without a thought of how foolish it is to make people miserable with a song. The watch on deck lit their pipes, and stationed themselves about to commune with their own thoughts, and especially to watch the sky, for, do what they would, they could not help feeling that

something unpleasant was coming. Aft, the young owners were having a boisterous game of cards in the pretty saloon, their care-free voices ringing up through the skylight and reaching the ears of the man at the wheel and the officer of the watch, who smiled in spite of their thoughts of possible disaster at the joviality of these young gentlemen who were so determined to be happy.

At six bells (11 P.M.) the merry four came on deck for the last smoke and gulp of sweet air before turning in. There they found the skipper, and were about to begin their usual chaffing remarks, when Mr. Smith caught sight of the moon, and with a start he said, "By jingo, captain, what's the matter with the silver lady? she looks sick, almost green." The skipper quietly answered, "Oh, nothing is the matter with the moon. But if you'll take my advice, you'll go and turn in, gentlemen; you'll want all the sleep you can get presently."

CHAPTER XIV

THE four looked as if they would like further explanations, but the serious look in the skipper's face made them feel that there was something more in the wind than they had bargained for, and so with a few cheery good-nights they went each to their cosy cabins, leaving the skipper with his load of worry. But by this time every one on board who was awake was sharing that load, even the live-stock, ducks and hens, and pigs, were showing their uneasiness by moving restlessly about and quacking, cackling, and squealing. The sky, which had been so beautifully clear and bright, was now covered with a filmy veil, through which the stars looked cold and dead, having lost their brightness. And the moon looked dreadful, livid, so different from her usual sweet, silver light. The sea, too, had a curious, uncertain movement, as if it did not know which way to run. The little waves raised their heads, and fell back again like the movements on the top of boiling water. And there was a smell of sulphur in the air—at least that was what one of the men called it, although, if he had known, it was not exactly sulphurous, but the scent of electricity, which is

called ozone, and when not too strong makes the exceeding pleasantness and briskness of the sea-side air. Even the compasses felt the coming change, and instead of pointing to the magnetic North, had apparently lost their guide and swung listlessly round and round the whole circle, unable to be quiet, although the ship's motion was hardly noticeable.

What wind there had been now died away into little peevish gusts, and yet there was a mournful note in it more to be felt than heard, like the far-off wail of a dying sea-bird. The sails hung down straight, except when occasionally the vessel gave a sluggish roll, as if a giant hand under the sea had pushed her keel sideways. It grew steadily darker, and when the captain went to look at the barometer he saw that faithful instrument giving full warning, for the mercury in its tube had not only settled down far below what it ever should be in that part of the world, but it was rising and falling in the tube as if it was being pumped.

All the captain's doubts were now at an end. He knew that a cyclone, the awful hurricane of the tropics, was very near, and, like the good man he was, his spirits rose to meet the coming need. While there was uncertainty he was troubled, but now that he knew, he was braced up in heart to meet anything. His voice rang out clear and sharp on the still air, which seemed

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to carry the sound much farther than usual. "Call all hands, shorten sail, and see that every sail is marled down tightly, so that no little flap shall catch the wind. Let all the gaskets be doubled, and remember that our lives may depend upon the furling. Be as quick as you can, but let there be no scamping of the work."

Up came the men, and in two minutes the work was in full swing, the rattle of patent blocks as the yards came down, and clewlines and buntlines were hauled upon, making a welcome break upon the deadly quiet reigning a little time before. There was not much to do on deck, for already everything that could be moved had been secured as firmly as it was possible; in fact, a ship could not have been better prepared for a storm than was the *Sirius*. The well-trained crew did the work rapidly but thoroughly, and in half-an-hour the vessel was stripped of all her sails but one, and that was the strongest in the ship. It set between the main and mizen masts, and was called a storm trysail, its business being partly to steady the vessel, and partly to keep her head pointing as near the wind as possible. Then she was hove-to on the starboard tack, that is, with what wind there was on the right-hand side looking towards the bows, because the captain knew that the storm when it met him would be twirling round like a

wheel upon its axle from left to right, and he wanted his ship to be constantly feeling the wind coming fair instead of going backwards and so getting in front of her, when there would be the danger of her driving astern and going down ; for ships are not built to go backwards, and it is very dangerous in bad weather to make them do so.

I hope you'll forgive me, dear boys, for this prosy description of what is done when a hurricane is coming. I've tried to make it as clear as I can, but it is a difficult subject to understand. Yet it is so important, that I couldn't slur it over. It is even more dangerous to make a mistake in, than biking in the midst of traffic and continually dodging on the wrong side of the road ; for there, skilful drivers may be able to get out of the way of a fool, and they would certainly try to, but the dreadful circular storm makes way for nothing, and only by the most skilful and intelligent handling of a ship can terrible disaster be avoided. Not always then, because the best of our skill and intelligence is helpless against accident, and if the ship herself is too weak to bear the strain of the storm, she may be lost with all her good men, no matter how brave and clever they may have been. In the present case, however, everything was as good as it could be, both in men and ship, and so they waited in confidence the issue of the coming

battle between man and the awful forces of Nature.

By the time that all was made as secure as it could be made the night was a solid black, a velvety black, that the eyes could not get so used to as to be able to see anything at all. This state of calm, entire darkness lasted a long, long hour, and then little crinkly lines of violet light began to run about the sky, but that was so low down that these strange fires seemed to be threading about the heads of the watchers, and filling them with strange feelings. No one spoke a word, for each was busy with his own thoughts, and what they were, who can tell? Then there was a sudden cool breath of air, followed by a blast as from an oven door. It put all hands on the alert, and it was time, for within five minutes it seemed as if sky and sea were coming together. The wind roared out from its lurking place with a howl as of a thousand starving lions, a deluge of rain fell as if an overhead ocean had suddenly been let fall, and through all the immense tumult ran those lines of fire which had been seen before, but a hundred times brighter, and of all colours. Before those terrors all hands cowered afraid and helpless. Each one in that dread moment became like a little child afraid of the dark, until the brave soul recovered and remembered where it belonged. But each now was alone; he could not talk to his fellow-

man, he dared not stir from his particular corner, could only wait and dimly hope that the terrible struggle above would presently ease down, and allow him to do something, no matter what, as long as it was action.

But what about the ship? She felt to the crew as if she were being swept off the surface of the sea into space. The air was no longer the atmosphere; it was almost solid water, for the furious tempest tore off the top of the sea and blended it with the falling floods from the sky, so that breathing was difficult, since all around was almost solid wetness. But where was Jemmy all this time? He felt as if everybody had forgotten him, and as if he were again alone upon the hencoop whereon he floated when the *Rosamund* went down. But he was so benumbed with fright that he did not think. Like the poor, homeless wanderer, hungry and half-frozen, he just bore it, and without knowing that he was doing so, hoped for a change for the better. Unless the ship broke up he was safe, for he had jammed himself into a corner of the forecastle, a part of the vessel that could hardly be swept away without destruction of the ship herself, and there, having no need to hold on, he waited in unknowing patience the passing of this time of utter fear. Even then he could not help thinking now and then of what was happening to his friends, and he wished with all his heart that he was among them, for

he felt that he should be, if not safer, at least happier.

Meanwhile, in the after-part of the ship the four young men who owned her all became fully alive to the seriousness of affairs. The tremendous uproar of the tempest overhead had aroused them, and they had gotten up quickly, dressed themselves, and sought one another. Said Mr. Smith, "Boys, this is what made our poor old skipper look so straight. I s'pose this is an East Indian hurricane, and if it is, we are in for an experience that we shan't forget in a hurry. What an awful row the wind is making, and the ship seems as if she was being blown sideways into the sky! I feel ashamed to be down here while those good fellows are on deck, but I don't want to add to the dear old skipper's anxiety. Still, what do you say; shall we go on deck?" "Of course," they all replied at once. "All right," said Smith; "but first of all, I've got a suggestion to make. In this solemn time let us own our God, and although we have been careless and thoughtless as boys are, I should like to tell Him how we trust Him, and ask Him, if it pleases Him, to save these good chaps that are serving us so well." "Good, man," cried the other three, and dropped on their knees, while Smith brokenly muttered, "O God, Father of us all, be with us in this awful hour. Forgive us our many sins, and if any of us must go, save the good fellows that are serving us so

faithfully. But, please, spare us all, and let us live to remember your tender care. For Jesus Christ's sake. Amen." They all responded, and jumped up feeling fit to face anything now, not because they had done the right thing, but because they felt that the Fatherly care of God was round about them.

They made for the companion steps cautiously, for the vessel's motion was horrible, maddening; and when at last they reached the top, they found to their dismay that they could not get on deck—the hatch was secured. Then for the first time they felt afraid, because the idea of being drowned like a rat in a trap is an awful one. They beat upon the inside of the hatch and shouted, not knowing that the infernal riot of the elements outside made their trifling attempts at noise no more to be heard than the softest whisper. And so after a little while, in which they felt all the agonies of those suddenly imprisoned in a death-trap, they came down the ladder again. Mr. Brown was the first to regain his composure, and he said, "Poor old skipper was trying to keep us safe from the terrors of the night, an' so he battened us down. I expect it's like hell up there, an' all those poor chaps are out in it." He had hardly finished speaking when the skipper appeared, having come down a small scuttle forward, where it was possible to pop up or down without running the risk of getting a huge mass of water

below. His eye was bright, and his face cheery as he said, "Why, gentlemen, are you awake? I should have thought that by this time nothing short of an earthquake would have disturbed your innocent slumbers." "Oh, cut it, skipper," said Mr. Jones; "we are grown up, and we know that you and your bully crowd are having a hard time of it. Let's get up and see what it's like. It's pretty bad of course, but we all feel we'd like to share things with you. Our lives are not worth any more than yours, you know."

"Well, gentlemen," replied the skipper, "if you really do want to know what's going on, I'm not the man to deny you, but I warn you it's as bad as it can be. We're right in the grip of a proper tropical cyclone, and the weather is so bad, that it looks as if the sea and sky were mixed up. Still, I don't know why you shouldn't dare to see the wonders of God Almighty's weather when He lets it loose. Come up and see it." So saying, he led the way forward through the little scuttle on deck, the four following closely behind him. But plucky as they were, when they reached the deck they shrank back appalled. They could see nothing, for the darkness was like that of Egypt in the day of her plague, it was solid black, and the wind—well, had they not held on with all their strength to the rope that was stretched along the deck, they felt that they must be blown into space. And they could not speak, for they

could hardly breathe, so furious was the wind. So they just held on, and wondered at the mighty power of the elements. How long they thus endured they did not know, but suddenly they felt the wind cease. And as it did so the sea jumped up, relieved from the incalculable pressure upon its surface. The helpless vessel was tossed about upon the tormented waves like a cork; she seemed to have lost all her weight, but they could hear the voices of one another, and were comforted. Presently the skipper's deep voice near them said, "She's just in the middle of it, and this awful sea has been the ending of many a fine ship less staunchly built than we are. When the other half of the storm reaches us, it will blow harder than ever, but she has behaved so well, that I feel confident we shall weather it. We've lost nothing but the boats; they are all gone. And apart from the expense, I don't know that it matters much."

But they took very little notice of what he said, they were so fully engaged in watching the extraordinary scene round about them. They seemed to be the centre of a great dome of whirling cloud, which moved without any wind to twist it so fiercely. And the sea upon which they tossed was just mad. It rose up in huge heaps as if some amazing giant was underneath trying to escape. But it was lighter, though where the light came from they could not know. Only now and then through a rent in the rugged dome of cloud

they saw a star, just a bright point visible for a moment, and then swallowed up. And while they gazed, full of awe and wonder at this extraordinary scene, there came a sudden blast of wind so fierce that it almost laid the vessel on her beam ends, on her side, that is, and pinned them all down to the deck. For the next few minutes it blew so hard that all the senses were numbed by the great roar, and the only consolation they could find was that it could not last like this very long. It did not. After the first ten minutes the fury of that blast settled down into the milder form of a tremendous gale, steady and true in force and direction, and again they felt as if they were being swept off the sea into a place where nothing was but wind and water.

The experienced senses of the skipper, however, knew that the worst of the storm had passed, and creeping below, he looked eagerly at the barometer to see that it was rising steadily, foretelling the coming of fine weather again. He returned on deck, to find that his owners were already satisfied that matters were better, and that their brave little ship had weathered the terrors of the night in gallant fashion, reflecting the utmost credit upon those who built her and the man who handled her. Every hour from thenceforward the weather improved, until—it seemed like the beginning of light—the sky cleared, the sun shone out, and all hands were called to make

sail, knowing that the worst was over, and that nothing now was to be expected but a heavy gale, which all were prepared to meet and laugh at.

Others, however, had not been so fortunate. They had hardly got sufficient sail upon her to get her to lie a course when the cry of "Sail oh" sounded from aloft. The usual questions followed, and as the man who had sighted the vessel reported her as dismasted and helpless, the course was altered, and the *Sirius* ran down to the unfortunate ship. She was a huge American-built sailing-ship, whose three masts had been snapped off about ten feet above the deck, and from whose decks everything had been swept, leaving her almost like a log. No boats, no bulwarks, no houses, and what was more ominous still was the way she wallowed in the still heavy sea, as if she was half full of water. The *Sirius* ran as close to her as possible, close enough to see that there were about twenty-five persons cowering about her stripped decks, looking as if the very next sea that tumbled aboard would sweep them off to death. What was to be done with no boats on either vessel and such a sea running; and, to make matters worse, no materials on board the derelict wherewith to make a raft? It did not take Captain Bunce long to decide. With wonderful energy he caused the spars, spare mast, and yards, that had been so firmly lashed that they

seemed part of the ship, to be cast adrift and sawed into suitable lengths, while he manœuvred the vessel so that she might sail along the weather side of the distressed ship. Every one toiled like beavers making a dam or birds building a nest, for they knew that life was at stake, and needed no encouragement to put forth their utmost exertions.

Not a moment was wasted, for the word had gone round that the stranger was sinking, and that it might even now be too late to save the lives of the crew. But in a wonderfully short space of time the raft was finished and hauled to the gangway, while the *Sirius* was brought as near to the weather side of the strange ship as prudence permitted. Then with a strong rope attached the raft was launched overboard and veered away, the wind and sea carrying it down to the sinking vessel. Those on board watched it coming, and no sooner was it alongside than they were seen hurriedly getting down upon it, bringing nothing with them but some small pieces of rope to make themselves fast with. The utmost speed was made, so that in less than half-an-hour the watchers on board the *Sirius* were able to haul the raft away from the derelict, and very soon it was alongside, and the rescued men, twenty-four of them, climbed on board. It was none too soon, for they were hardly over the side before the ship they had left gave two or three shuddering lurches,

then with a deep curtsey, as if saying good-bye, she glided head foremost downwards, her stern poising high in air for a moment or two before she finally disappeared, leaving only a momentary whirl in the water to show where there had so recently floated a fine ship.

All sail was immediately made on the *Sirius*, and her course again set for the Cape, while the wants of the saved men were attended to. Poor fellows, they bore upon them evident marks of the terrible time they had been through, and none of them had entirely escaped being hurt, while they were half starved and very weary. She had been the *Kong Kolv* of Bergen, 1300 tons' register, bound to Hong-Kong from Cardiff with a cargo of coal, and up to the time when she met the hurricane had been all that a ship could be. But she was old, and the terrible hurricane soon found out the weak spots in her masts and riggings, so that quite early in the course of the storm she lost her three great spars with all their weight of yards and web of rigging. And on their fall they still more damaged the already strained hull, until she began to leak most dangerously. All the boats had been swept away, and the bulwarks had also gone, so that the apparently doomed men could not stand at the pumps for the great masses of water which continually swept over her. They could not hoist a signal of distress, having nowhere to hoist it to, and so they were

face to face with what seemed to be inevitable and sudden death, when, like an angel from heaven, the *Sirius* hove in sight, fit, and able, and anxious to save.

They were a happy, jovial crowd on board the *Sirius* that night. Her own crew were jolly, for they had the splendid consciousness of having done a good deed, and the rescued crew were happy, for already the big-hearted young owners had promised them that they should be no losers by the misfortune that had overtaken them, a misfortune to which the poor sailor is peculiarly liable, and for which he has no remedy. Captains and officers may, and do often, insure their belongings against loss, but the cost of doing so is a heavy charge upon their slender pay. "Common" sailors, as they are called, know nothing about the insurance, and if they did, it is not very likely that they would avail themselves of it, never being noted for forethought.

Now the days flew by, every man of the crew, with the exception of the owners, busy with the thought of how he was going to dispose of his wealth. It was a subject that never grew stale, although it was not only discussed continually whenever two men got together, but when men were alone, as at the wheel or on the look-out they built castles in the air as high as the heavens, and never seemed to grow tired of doing so. The gruff old boatswain and the officers got very sick

of this habit on the part of the men, although they themselves indulged in it, for it was almost impossible to get any work properly attended to, and the steering was very bad. But as the skipper said, some allowance must be made, and anyhow, the vessel was in very good trim. More than that, she was highly favoured by the weather. As if the late tremendous storm had collected all the bad weather in the Indian Ocean and used it up at once, the *Sirius* sailed on with favouring breezes of just the right weight, with smooth seas and clear, brilliant skies.

Oh, but she was a happy ship! There are always some men on board a ship that will grumble if possible, but everything here was so ideal, that it was not possible for any one to grumble. And as they drew nearer to their destination the very perfection of their happiness made some of them begin to fear that it was all too good to last, that something must happen to break the chain of so much pleasure. They forgot the terrors through which they had passed and became very careful, almost tremblingly so, which was perhaps as well. Yet nothing did occur. A dead calm fell on them when they reached the Agulhas Bank, which set all hands whistling for wind, but the skipper ordered up the fishing-tackle, and all hands had a regular carnival of fishing. Those lonely patches off the Cape literally swarm with fish of great size, and they had apparently halted upon one

of the thickest patches. For eight hours, from just after noon till nearly midnight, the decks were a scene of wild enjoyment as the great fish were hauled out of the still depths and flopped on board.

Then suddenly a little breeze sprang up again, the sails were trimmed to it, and away the *Sirius* glided, while the lines were put away and the decks cleared of their fishy load, for she really looked more like Billingsgate market than the trim yacht she was. It was a very pleasant little break in the run home, and now, as so often happens in those waters, the favourable wind blew steady and strong. On the thirteenth day after the hurricane the look-out on the foreyard shouted "Land oh" with all the strength of his lungs, and all hands gathered on the forecastle to feast their eyes upon the grim profile of the Cape of Good Hope.

"Get the anchors over the bows, rouse up the cables and range them, make all ready for port." Surely never did men work more cheerily or with such high hopes for the future. Gaily she swung round the Cape close to, making her number with the flags to the watchers ashore, up along the coast and into Table Bay, until with a clatter and bang down went the anchor, and the *Sirius* was safe in port. Anchor watches were set (it was just sunset), and strict orders given for most careful guard to be kept; she might yet be run down by some blundering craft coming in and being badly

handled. Still nothing happened, and early dawn brought pilot and tug. Up anchor, pass along the hausers, and presently the gallant little ship, with her load of wealth and her eager crew, was safely moored alongside the quay in the docks, her wonderful, if short, voyage over, and the high hopes with which those on board of her set forth more than abundantly justified. Then all hands were called aft, and each man was informed that, pending the inquiry into the value of the treasure, whatever money was needed would be advanced by the captain to all applying, but he strongly advised everybody to go slow, and above all to keep their own counsel, as otherwise they would soon be surrounded by a horde of thieves, of whom there are great store in Cape Town. And then he dismissed them with his best wishes.

CHAPTER XV

IN the excitement of such a return as that of the *Sirius* boys are apt to be forgotten, although they themselves, as is quite right and proper, may feel that they are fully as important as any other member of the crew. And so Jemmy and his fortunes took a back seat for the time, but now that the first rush was over Mr. Smith remembered Jemmy, and came down from the hotel to which he and his three friends had gone to stay on purpose to see the youngster, in whom he had always taken a quiet, steady interest. He found him, as he had hoped to do, still at work on such odd jobs as were assigned to him by the mate, but casting wistful glances at the shore as if he would dearly like a run. When Mr. Smith called he ran to obey the summons, full of pleasant thoughts as to what he might be wanted for, but the highest of them only reaching a day's outing. "Well, Jemmy, boy," said Mr. Smith, "and what are you going to do with yourself when you're paid off—going home, I suppose?" Jemmy's face fell, for the many times he had been asked a similar question had gradually made a desire spring

up in his heart that he had a home to go to, father, mother, brothers and sisters, who would always be thinking about him while he was away, and would always be glad to see him back. He felt it every day more hard to bear that he should be alone in the world, a loneliness that even the goodness and faithfulness of the friends he had made could not make up for. But he stifled down his thoughts and only answered civilly, "I've got no home, sir." "Oh, of course, poor little beggar, I forgot that. Sorry, I'm sure. I didn't mean to touch you on a sore place. What I did mean was, were you going home to England, the dear old country we all try to get back to when our wanderings in foreign lands have made us tired?" Again Jemmy looked up and said with perfect truth and sincerity, "I don't know, sir."

Then Mr. Smith, realising how dangerous it would be to let a youngster like Jemmy loose upon his own resources with a very large sum of money, felt that it was necessary to do something to protect the boy from the harm that would certainly come to him if he were let go. And so he said, "All right, Jemmy, run away for a bit, and I'll send for you presently. I want to have a talk with Captain Bunce for a while. Better go down and clean up ready to go ashore; tell the mate I told you to." Off ran Jemmy overjoyed and sought the mate, who only grunted "All right,"

and turned away with a dissatisfied air, as much as to say, "Why can't I go ashore and enjoy myself like everybody else?" For he was little more than a boy himself. However, Jemmy knew nothing of the mate's troubles, and he made all haste to get into his best clothes, finding to his dismay that they were now too small for him. But he stretched them on somehow—a little thing like that was not going to trouble him—and as soon as he was ready, ran aft and presented himself at the saloon door. As soon as the skipper and Mr. Smith caught sight of him they both burst into a shout of laughter at the quaint figure he cut, and Jemmy, mortified beyond measure, turned red and wiped away a furtive tear; for like the rest of us, to be laughed at was hateful to him, especially when, as in this case, he knew it was no fault of his. But the kind-hearted men seeing his distress hastened to console him, Mr. Smith saying, "Never mind, Jemmy, it shows how you've grown, and I'm sure you ought to be glad of that. Besides, it can soon be altered, and shall be too. Come on shore with me and we'll see you rigged out in a brace of shakes, and then you won't know yourself. Good-bye, Captain Bunce; I'll send him back safe."

Away they both went, Mr. Smith swinging gaily along, and Jemmy feeling shy, for he fancied everybody was staring at him and thinking what a guy he looked. Of course he was quite mistaken,

but that was how he felt, and I can sincerely sympathise with him. But his uneasiness did not last long. In a very short time they came to a big outfitter's shop, whose proprietor, recognising Mr. Smith, was most eager to please, and before many minutes had passed Jemmy was transformed, so great is the change that a good suit of clothes makes in us, into quite a fine-looking young gentleman, whose reflection in the big mirror he could hardly recognise as himself. The fitter noticing Jemmy's glances of approval and admiration of himself said, "I am glad to see you like your appearance, young man, but I hope you don't make the mistake of supposing that you are better because you've got a good suit of clothes on. It's my business to make and sell clothes, but I've often been sorry to see how stuck-up many people get because they've been able to put a nice rig-out on their backs." Jemmy stared at him, wondering what on earth he meant by talking like that, and he seeing the look said with a sigh, "Yes, I know you feel that I have no business to talk to you like that, but I hope you'll forgive me. I'm so fond of boys, and I've seen so many of them spoilt for the want of anybody to say a word to them at the right time." His humility and kindly face touched Jemmy at once, and he broke out, "Please forgive *me*, sir, I didn't mean to be rude. I am pleased with the clothes, but I have got such a lot of good friends, that I don't think I'll

be spoiled. And I don't think you'd be afraid for me if you knew them either." "I'm so glad," said the man simply, and shook hands. And so they parted, but Jemmy never forgot the tailor's reminder of the old truth, that the clothes do not make the man.

Beaming with pleasure Jemmy stepped out of the dressing-room and met Mr. Smith, who said, "Why, you look quite a man now, Jemmy; it was a shame to laugh at you because of your clothes. But come along, our friends will be growing impatient." And off they went to the hotel, where the three young men received them with great glee, and gave Jemmy exquisite delight by treating him as one of themselves. A sumptuous dinner was ready, which all did justice to, and then, a carriage being ready, they went for a drive in the country, as full of fun as a lot of youngsters should be out for a holiday. They spent a very happy afternoon together, and as they were returning Mr. Smith told Jemmy that they had decided upon taking the *Sirius* to the West Indies and having a cruise there. "And," he went on, "if you like, lad, you may come too; your share of the money when it is divided shall be invested for you, and it will accumulate for you until you get old enough to handle it. Captain Bunce will be in charge of the ship, and we will see that your education goes on. As you say that you have no one at home waiting for you, I think this will be

best for you. What do you say? You shall do what you like, but you'll be happier and better off with us, I think, than you would be anywhere else."

Well, what could Jemmy say? He felt of course, as was only natural, that he would like to go his own way, but, in the first place, he had a little distrust in himself, in the next, he knew that he would be well looked after, and lastly, he didn't like to offend such good friends as these young gentlemen had shown themselves. So he said, "Thank you, sir, I'd like to come with you," and the matter was settled for the time. He went back on board quite satisfied, but not quite as grateful as he might have been in our estimate, because he had been partly spoiled by such continuous good fortune.

When he got on board the vessel was deserted by all but the watchman, and he felt very lonely. The reaction after the day's excitement had set in, and he became quite dull and miserable. Had he known it, he was in great danger, for he had a strong desire to get ashore and run loose, and with his want of experience and forgetfulness of what had happened to him the last time, he was peculiarly liable to get into serious trouble. But the same good Providence that had watched over him ever since he first went to sea did not desert him now. He was looking over the rail and meditating a run ashore by himself when he caught sight of a

man painfully creeping along the wharf as if he were a cripple. He watched the coming figure with growing interest, until presently his sharp eyes recognised the features, and he sprang ashore, rushed up to the halting stranger, and almost screamed, "Mr. Burney, don't you remember me?" The stranger stopped bewildered, looked down upon the bright face before him, and for a moment seemed about to burst out into tears. Then with a great effort he recovered himself, and said in a husky voice, "It is my little Jemmy, but oh how changed. Thank God, I've seen you again. Whatever are you doing? Where are you living?" Panting with excitement Jemmy said, "Oh, do come aboard my ship, sir; you will like her; here she is, this beautiful barquentine. I'll tell you all about it. Come on, sir; I'll help you; whatever has happened to you? How did you get hurt?" All this in gasping sentences, and not waiting for an answer, but the sweetest music imaginable to the ears of the broken-down man.

Very, very gently Jemmy led his old friend on board and into the cosy little house where he lived with the petty officers, all of whom were ashore. Lighting the lamp with trembling hands he made Mr. Burney as comfortable as he could. Even then, since everybody was ashore but the watchman, he could offer his friend nothing in the way of refreshment, but the old mate never noticed that, he was too glad to meet the boy again whom he had

befriended and see him doing well to want anything. He sat and listened intently while Jemmy told him the story of his adventures since they had parted, and felt as happy as a father would be in the good fortune of a beloved son. Then suddenly Jemmy stopped in the full tide of his telling and said penitently, "Oh, Mr. Burney, I'm so sorry; I've been talking about myself all this time, and I've never asked how you've been getting on, and how it is that you're so ill and crippled. Do tell me, sir."

"My dear Jemmy," said the mate, "if you knew how much good it has done me to find that you've been doing so well and are so happy, you wouldn't feel sorry for telling me all about yourself. Before I saw you I was very miserable, but now I feel quite cheered up; I can't tell you how thankful I am to know that you've been getting on so well. But I must tell you what has happened to me. As you know, I went away from here when we parted as mate of a barque, the *Seafarer*, to Adelaide and thence home. She wasn't a bad ship, and I began to hope that I was fixed in her for a long spell. But when we reached London the skipper told me that while I suited him very well, he had a cousin, a chief mate, who was out of a berth, and a man must look after his own family first, so I had to go. I was sorry, for I knew well how hard it is for an elderly man like me to get a ship as mate when there are so many

smart young fellows coming on and pushing their way to the front. But I had a bit of money saved, and I lived carefully, watching every chance. I tramped the docks around every day, and never missed one opportunity that I heard of. But it was all no good. My money dwindled away, until at last, being afraid of having to go before the mast again, which at my time of life would have been terrible, I took a berth as second mate in a big tramp steamer bound to the Cape with coal, at only ten shillings a month more than the firemen were getting. Oh, Jemmy boy, she was a beast. There were only six hands to work her, and she carried four thousand tons of coal. I worked harder than any of the fellows forrard—a mixed gang they were too; and many a time, what with the jeers of the young mate and skipper and the worry of the crew, I wished myself dead. And then, just a couple of days before we ought to have made Cape Town, we fell in with a heavy gale of wind, and the rubbishy engines broke down. We hove her to, but she lay right in the trough of the sea, and as I was working with a couple of hands to secure some gear on deck, a big sea broke aboard and caught me, dashed me up against the combings of the main hatch, and broke both my legs. When we got in they put me in hospital—I don't like to speak of what I suffered before we did get in—and then it was found that I should be a cripple for life.

Of course I was paid off, and can be sent home as a distressed British seaman, but when I get back I must go into the workhouse. I do feel it hard, my boy, although I try to bear it, but I wished with all my soul that the sea which broke my legs had killed me."

Jemmy, who had been listening with the most painful sympathy, here broke in with, "Please, don't say that, sir; perhaps I can help you. Anyhow, I'm so glad to have met you again, and I feel sure the gentlemen who own this ship will do something for you, for they're awfully good. And the skipper is a jolly good man too. Oh, you'll be all right, sir; you see if you ain't. As soon as ever they come aboard I'll tell 'em about you, an' ——" "Hush, Jemmy," said the old mate, "you mustn't talk like that. It would be begging, and I'd rather starve. I couldn't beg—but there, I'm so broken down, I don't know what I could do," and the poor man burst into crying like a child, frightening Jemmy very much, because he had never seen a man cry before, and had an idea that they couldn't. However, as soon as he recovered from his scare he did his best to console his friend, hoping with all his heart that he might be able to help him.

There was a sound of footsteps on deck, and Jemmy, begging Mr. Burney to sit still, rushed up to see who was there. He found it was Captain

Bunce and the chief officer, who had returned, and he at once asked the skipper if he might speak to him. The skipper smiled indulgently at the boy, and bade him go ahead. And in broken, breathless fashion Jemmy poured out the story of his early friend and protector, winding up with an earnest appeal to the skipper to do something for him if possible. Captain Bunce only said, "Bring your friend aft, Jemmy, I'd like to see him and talk to him," and Jemmy flew to obey. Mr. Burney was inclined to refuse and flee ashore, but he thought in time how foolish that would be, and ungrateful besides, so he came aft, his face burning and his whole body twitching with nervousness. Captain Bunce met him at the saloon door, and greeting him cordially, helped him in, and set him at his ease at once by beginning to talk about Jemmy, who had with great good sense stayed outside. It was a good topic to break the ice with, for they both loved the boy, only, as Mr. Burney said wistfully, "I found him in the street and took him to sea, and we've been through so much together, that I feel as if he was my own son. In fact, I couldn't love a son more than I do him. And I'm so glad he fell upon his feet when I became unable to look after him any more. He couldn't have got with a better man, if only half what he has said to me about you is true."

"Oh," replied the skipper, "he's like most boys,

given to stretching things a bit, I suppose. I haven't done anything for him but give him a job and see that he earned his money. But what about yourself? He has told me something, but I could hardly make it out, except that you've had an awful rough time, and were so badly hurt that you'd probably be a cripple for life. I hope that isn't so?" "I wish it wasn't," sadly responded Mr. Burney, "but I'm afraid there's no hope—at least the doctors don't give me any. And I don't feel any myself. You see I lay for several days without anything being done for me at all, and I suppose the mischief was past repair when they got me to hospital." "Ah, well," answered the skipper, "it's a bad business, but there's one thing, you've come to the right shop, whether by accident or Providence. Now, here's a berth for you"—flinging wide the door of a state-room; "look upon this as yours for the present, at any rate." "I beg pardon, captain," stammered Mr. Burney. "I—I—can't. I'm not clear at my boarding-house, and all my kit is there." "That's all right," said the skipper stolidly. "You've got nothing to do with that. All you've got to do is to make yourself comfortable and not worry about anything. I'll send up for your traps and pay whatever there is; and don't make any mistake, I'm only doing what my owners would make me do if I wasn't inclined to. You don't know 'em; when you do, you'll understand. Now just keep quiet, there's

a good man, and let's have a yarn about old times."

In vain Mr. Burney tried to get out some broken words of thanks. Captain Bunce took no notice of him, like the perfect gentleman he was, but went on talking about professional matters until bed-time. But before the skipper retired he sent for Jemmy, and informed him that his dear old friend was all right, and should be well looked after.

Morning brought everybody on board connected with the ship, for it was the day appointed for sharing out the treasure according to the value put upon it by the wise men ashore. As it was such a busy time, Captain Bunce did not trouble his employers with Mr. Burney's story, keeping it in reserve until the heavy business of the day should be over. At Mr. Smith's request all hands were summoned to the saloon, and as soon as they were assembled he greeted them heartily and plunged into his subject. "Friends and ship-mates," he said, "you will remember that I told you when we left Christmas Island, that whatever the value of our find, it should be divided into a hundred parts, of which sixty should be for the A.B.'s and myself and three friends, and forty for the captain and officers. Well, we have had the treasure valued by these gentlemen" (pointing to some strangers behind him), "who are accountants and valuers of the highest repute in

Cape Town, and they have assessed the value of the treasure at £600,000, for which amount we have exchanged it, and the money is now lying to our credit in the Bank of South Africa. So there is £360,000 for us, men, which, divided by twenty-four—that is, twenty of you and four of us—gives us £15,000 apiece, for which I have the greatest pleasure in presenting you cheques. You can get them cashed at once if you will, or open accounts with the bank for the amount on their faces. For the afterguard, if you would like to hear, the captain takes eleven shares, equal to £66,000; the mate six, equal to £36,000; the second mate five, equal to £30,000; the boatswain and carpenter four each, £24,000; the cook and steward £18,000 each, and the diver £18,000 also, which, added to his share as A.B., makes him up to £33,000, and that, I am sure, nobody will begrudge him, since without him we could have done nothing at all. Lastly comes Jemmy. Well, we could hardly give Jemmy as boy more than one share, £6000, but still we felt that as he really had reported the wrecks first, that was hardly fair. So we have agreed among ourselves—we owners, I mean, not being particularly hard pressed for money—to make Jemmy up another share between us, bringing his share to £12,000. And now, dear friends, I'm only a youngster, and I've never known what it is to want a pound in my life, thanks to good friends and relatives, but I have seen how hard

a time the man has who does not want merely pounds, but pence. Forgive me for speaking so to men old enough to be my father, but each of you has got a fortune which, if rightly handled, will keep you in ease and comfort all the rest of your days, or enable you to be a help and comfort to many a poor fellow you may come across in the days to come. Please don't throw it away. You've a right to do so if you will, for it's yours, but if you'll only think of what a good time you may have with it if you're careful, you'll think of what I am saying, I am sure. The ship will pay off to-day at twelve o'clock if you capitalists are not too proud to come up to the shipping office and lift your hard-earned wages."

There was a pause for about ten seconds after Mr. Smith had finished speaking, and then a hoarse voice was heard saying, "Boys, three cheers for the best owners sailor-men ever came across yet." Hip, hip, hooray, four times repeated in that narrow space was deafening, and even those thus honoured were glad when the noise had died away. Then the company dispersed, and the owners and officers were left in quiet possession of the cabin. Captain Bunce lost no time in acquainting Mr. Smith and his friends with what he had done in the matter of Mr. Burney, and as he had supposed they would, they heartily approved of his action. Poor Burney shamefacedly coming forward (I don't know why good men usually regard misfortune as their fault,

and wasters turn even good fortune into bad account), met the young men as if he was a criminal about to be sentenced for wrong-doing. But his hesitation was put to flight at once by the manner of his reception. Mr. Smith held out both hands to him with a bright smile, and drew him to a seat, saying, "You mustn't stand on those poor, ill-used legs of yours too much. We've heard all about your hard time, and want to make it up to you." In a very few minutes Mr. Burney found himself chatting away with the four young men as pleasantly as if he had known them all his life, and telling them of all his late adventures quite freely, as sailors will when they can find a sympathetic listener who understands their language.

When his story was finished Mr. Smith said, "Well, Mr. Burney, we're off for a cruise in the West Indies as soon as ever we can get away, and we should like the pleasure of your company and the benefit of your advice on the trip. Your young friend is coming with us, I am glad to say, and his fortune will be banked for him so that he can draw upon it at any time. At present he doesn't know the value of money, happy lad, and so it's just as well that he is in good hands, and will be kept out of mischief, and protected from thieves. Of course you will resume your position as his guardian, and advise him as you think best." "Gentlemen," replied Mr. Burney

in a broken voice, "I do not know what to say to this goodness of yours, except that I feel that you have done just what I should have done myself if I had been in your position. But one doesn't often meet with such real generosity and consideration among those who have the power as you have, and I am deeply grateful. As to my advice, &c., I'm not deceiving myself. You won't require any interference from me, especially with such a fine skipper as you've got—it's just your kind way of making me feel that I am doing something in return for what I am receiving. However, I thank you with all my soul, and I thank you for the boy too; it has been a wonderful trip for him, and he ought to be grateful all his life long for such marvellous good fortune. I believe he will be, too."

"All right then, that's settled," said Mr. Smith; "and now, boys, are you ready for beach again. We've got lots to do, and so have all hands I expect, and we'd better clear out of this for the time. Have you got anything more to say to me, Captain Bunce; I'm just off ashore again?" "No, thank you," laughingly replied the skipper, "my head's so full of my windfall that I don't feel as if I could talk about anything else. I feel as I want just to sit down and gloat over it for a while." This only raised a general laugh, and the young men departed, leaving the captain and Mr. Burney alone together. As soon as they

were gone the skipper said cheerily, "There, old man, I told you what sort of birds my owners were. And now, all you've got to do is to make yourself as happy as you can. I don't believe you'll find anything here to make you miserable. And for goodness' sake, don't keep thinking about being under obligation to anybody. Those young fellows are the right sort, no stuck-up patronage about them, and it would make them unhappy if they thought you were fretting about your helplessness. Now don't say another word, but try and be happy. I'm going to call Jemmy." Not a word was spoken until the boy appeared, eagerly looking for his old friend.

"Well, Jemmy," said the captain, "you are a man of fortune now, got no need to trouble your head about poverty any more as long as you live if you put your money away solid and don't let anybody coax you out of it." "Please, sir," answered Jemmy, "I'd like to give it to Mr. Burney." "Oh, nonsense, boy," said Mr. Burney sharply, "you don't know what you are talking about. How do you think I could let you do anything of the kind?" "I'm sorry, sir, to say anything cheeky, but I feel I do know what I'm talking about, and I do want you to have it. I can earn my own living, and if it hadn't been for you, I should have been dead long ago. Please, do take it, and let me be what you said you wished I was, your son. And if it is enough

for us to live upon, we can live together, and I'll try and get on as you'd want me to." The two men looked at one another and then at Jemmy, feeling how good and pleasant a thing was real gratitude.

CHAPTER XVI

BEFORE the three friends parted that night it was decided that Jemmy's £12,000 should be invested in Consols, which you ought to know, if you don't already, is a way of lending money to the Government, and is rewarded by interest at the rate of two pounds ten for every hundred lent, or nearly so. And unless the country goes to pieces or is conquered by some other hungry Power, it will always be paid. That made Jemmy's income about seven pounds a week, a huge fortune in the eyes of plain working people, but of course a trifle to those extravagant folks who spend as much in a week as would keep a dozen workmen's families for years, and more than an ordinary sailor earns his whole life long. As they were engaged for the next few months, there could be no question of settling down ashore just yet. So having decided to invest the money in Jemmy's name with Mr. Burney as trustee, they left it at that and went to bed thoroughly tired out, but all quite happy.

Next day was a stirring one, for there was much excitement in the town over the behaviour of some of the crew, who were bent upon trying to get rid of their wealth as quickly as they could. It was

pitiful to see the way these poor fellows, who had never before owned a hundred pounds at one time, were throwing their money about, money which rightly used would have brought them, if not happiness, comfort for the rest of their lives. Two of them had hired a floor in a hotel and a carriage and four to drive about in. Every worthless rascal that chose to hang on to them was able to get both money and drink, and they even went to the curious length of buying strings of gold watches and hung them around their waists, just like poor savages who had never seen money before, or had any idea of its value. Stories of the mad behaviour of these few foolish fellows kept pouring in all day, and even appeared in the local newspapers. And all sorts of land-sharks infested the vessel in the hope of picking up something in the general scramble, until it became necessary to get some policemen to guard the ship and keep these rascals away.

That night Captain Bunce went up to the hotel where the owners were staying and begged them to hasten their departure, for, as he said, it was becoming a perfect nuisance the way in which all the blackguards of Cape Town (and they have always a fine stock there of all nationalities) kept charging the ship in the desperate attempt to get something. It was not possible to go a hundred yards in any direction without being stalked like game by sharpers, fellows living on their wits, and

just ravenous to get hold of some of the spoil brought back by the *Sirius*. They even disguised themselves as workmen, painters, carpenters, riggers, &c., who were labouring to get the vessel ready for her cruise, bribing the legitimate workers heavily to let them take their places and so get on board the ship, which they seemed to think was a regular gold mine. Jemmy was a special mark for them, these conscienceless sportsmen who, like what they call the "boys" in London, regard any person of either sex as fair game if only they have got a little money of which they may be cheated. But their perseverance met with no success, for Jemmy never had any money, and always took any proposition made to him by these enterprising thieves straight to his friend Mr. Burney, who, unlike most sailors, had a wholesome common-sense understanding of the wiles of longshore swindlers.

These representations on the part of Captain Bunce to his owners were listened to with great interest, and every effort was made to hurry the ship away, until the great difficulty arose of getting a crew. One condition only was made by the owners respecting the engaging of the ship's company—it was that they should all be British or Colonial, or American, Anglo-Saxon at any rate, for as I have before noted, they were all ardent lovers of their own country, and felt that it was high time something was done to give our own people a chance against those eager haters of Britain who swarm

into her like locusts, and while enjoying all the benefits of her freedom and equal laws, never cease plotting for her destruction or slandering her. Mind, boys, I am not a hater of foreigners. If they will only cease their intense hatred of our dear country and treat us as we treat them, the world would be a very much happier place, but look where we will, we find nothing but poisonous slanders of Britain and everything British, and it behoves every British boy to know this and act accordingly. This is no place to talk about high politics, but I would have every boy realise that his first duty is to his own family, and after that to his country. This is not selfishness, but following the scriptural injunction. It is mere foolishness—it is worse, it is wickedness—to give away all one's substance to outsiders, and let those near and dear to us starve.

Still, with all the despatch possible, it was a full week before the *Sirius* was ready for sea and had a crew of Anglo-Saxon nationality. Several of them were men who were nearly starving, because in a British colony they had been shouldered out by foreigners, haters of Britain, and intent upon doing her harm. But they were a fine crew, and when by the bounty of the owners they had been well fed and clothed, you would have hardly known them again. One man voiced the sentiment of the whole crew when he said, "For the last four years I've been sailin' under my own flag in ships

manned by foreigners of all nations, and they haven't forgotten to let me know it—made me feel as if I was a hinterloper in my own country's ships. Now, thank God, I can hold my head up and do my bit with the best man afloat, an' I'll put up with anything before I'll sail with these square-headed slanderers again." Coarse, but true. Boys, never forget that your dear country has had a glorious history, the great apostle of freedom in the world, a work for which millions of your forefathers gave their best blood, and don't let the enemies of freedom take your heritage away from you if you can help it. Speak up boldly against any man, be he your countryman or not, who would advocate your letting foreign enemies of freedom dictate to you.

Now I've done preaching, and get back to the *Sirius*, all ready for sea, fit to face any weather, spick-and-span as if just launched, new flags flying, bright faces all about her, released from her warps at the dock and towed out into the bay. Many wistful eyes followed her, for it was common talk among the longshoremen how happy a ship she was, and as she passed through the dock gates a hearty cheer went up from the crowd there assembled. It was answered with tremendous force, for every one on board felt happy, and some superstitious sailors fancied that they too might have another slice of luck such as had fallen to the lot of the men they had seen swaggering about

Cape Town streets in all the glory of their easily-gotten wealth. But that, of course, was foolish of them, for nothing of the kind was possible, since the present cruise was purely for pleasure. However, it was only what one might have expected among them, having heard such tales as they had ashore.

For the present all thoughts of the future were banished in much work. There was a splendid south-westerly wind blowing, not too stiff, but such as the *Sirius* could carry all sail to, and with all expedition the great breadths of canvas were hoisted and sheeted home, making the vessel leap forward like some high-mettled horse. For a wonder, every one on board was glad to leave. I say for a wonder, because you will usually find that when a vessel leaves a civilised port like Cape Town there will be some on board who are sad at parting with those whom they love. But no one on board the *Sirius* had any ties like that. The three new officers were all men whom accident had stranded there, and who hailed the opportunity of joining the *Sirius* as especially sent from Heaven on their behalf, although they did not yet know how comfortable a berth they had found. As for Mr. Burney and Jemmy they were beyond measure happy, for they had found one another again, and their mutual love had grown deeper and stronger for the long separation. The crew found every hour something fresh to show them

how good and comfortable a ship they were in, and they were especially delighted with the splendid food and spacious accommodation afforded them. But, as one grizzled old salt said, "This here packet's goin' to spoil me for the regular wind-jammer or tramp. Still, make the most of a good ship while you've got her is my motto, and I ain't goin' to growl about the next ship if I know it."

By nightfall they had left South Africa fading into the darkness astern, and under a glorious sky, all besprinkled with brilliant stars, were gliding along at the rate of ten knots an hour, every stitch drawing, and the vessel's motion as easy as that of a cradle rocked by a fond mother. All hands were gathered on deck, singing the sweet old songs of a bygone day, and full of enjoyment of the pleasant time. Then, as if to add to the pleasure of the night, an immense school of porpoises joined the ship and wove their mazy dances around her, girdling her with lines of living fire. Oh, it was a beautiful scene, and one that a man who had once witnessed it could never forget or cease to wonder why those favoured children of fortune who could afford it should choose to stay amongst the stale, so-called pleasures of town, theatres, and balls, and concerts and dinners, when they could have such a life as this. The songs ceased, and quiet conversation set in—quaint yarns of experiences on

many seas, and comparisons between times of hardships and suffering and present delights—until gentle sleep claimed the watch below, and even the vigorous young men aft, wondering at the way in which pleasant weariness claimed their attention, dropped off, one by one, and presently left the vessel in charge of the watch on deck, to pursue her quiet way over that shining sea, escorted by the happy sea-creatures, who never seem tired.

The wind held strongly and steadily all night, and when morning broke the fine little craft was still pressing on her course northward at the same good rate. She was not alone, for three fine ships homeward bound, and all making the best they could of the good opportunity, were near. Signals were exchanged, and the usual sea courtesies paid by the fluttering flags. But, as the seasoned sailors on board the *Sirius* said one to another, there was a big difference between their lot and that of the poor chaps on board those ships, who would have to toil all day long getting their vessels pranked up for home, and do it upon the poorest food and the minimum of rest. I don't want to grumble at what is past, but when I was little more than a boy, second mate of just such a ship as one of those the *Sirius* was passing, I have had to do with only four hours' sleep out of the twenty-four in the day, and have not known how to keep my eyelids propped apart during

the night. People ashore often say they wonder what sailors find to do on a long voyage. The remark is born of pure ignorance. If they would only think how regularly the work must go on to keep a house in order, they would not wonder that much more work is necessary to keep a complicated machine like a ship in order. But I know we shall never be able to make lands-people understand things on board ship, so what is the use of trying? one is tempted to say.

Very pleasantly the days glided by, until on the sixth day after leaving Cape Town the gloomy mass of St. Helena appeared on the horizon, and of course the *Sirius* must call there. Once all sailing ships homeward bound from the East Indies made a point of anchoring at this lonely South Atlantic island, famous in all our history as the place where we decided to imprison that terrible tyrant Napoleon when once we had stopped his evil career. It will always be a great item in the credit account of our beloved country that she freed Europe from that very bad man, but few, I think, are sufficiently wise and grateful to see that his imprisonment upon this lonely rock was the only good thing that could have been done with so great a villain, except putting him to death. However, there will always be people who allow themselves to forget the rights of man in their foolish worship of a great butcher.

The *Sirius* came gliding along under the

towering cliffs with her sails carefully reduced, for there are heavy puffs which come down the gorges of that island that will tear the masts out of a strong ship if her officers are not careful, and when she got abreast of the cleft in the rocks in which Jamestown nestles her helm was put down, round she came, and the anchor was let go. It dropped just upon the bank which lies in front of the little town, and is the only place where a ship can anchor—all around the water is so deep, the island rising sheer out of the deep sea, that no ship's cable is long enough to reach the bottom. She was no sooner still than a lot of boats came off, full of funny women clamouring for washing, and offering water-cresses and fish for sale. But these visitors got very little attention, poor things; they missed the many ships that used to call, and were hard put to it to get a living at all. The boat was got out, and the owners, accompanied by the skipper, went ashore to see the sights, knowing that although the anchorage was only an open roadstead, the weather was so settled that the vessel was perfectly safe. For a few minutes Jemmy felt a bit sore at not being able to go and see the wonderful sights he felt sure would be afforded by this historic island, until Mr. Burney hobbled up to him and asked him if he had any fishing tackle. Then all his disappointment was at once forgotten, for he had early learned to be passionately fond of fishing—in fact, he did not

care for any other amusement now while there was fishing to be done. And Mr. Burney sat carefully propped up by his side, talking all the while about the fish they were getting—curious fish of all sorts and shapes and sizes—and of days and nights of fishing all over the world, until the crew clustered around them enviously, and wondered how it was possible for an old man and a young boy to be so happy together. Presently everybody on board was fishing, and what had promised to be a rather dull evening after the skipper and owners had gone, turned out to be a most enjoyable time, until sleep claimed the fishermen one by one, and only the watch was left to try in vain for fish that had retired for the night, as all respectable fish should do.

With lines coiled up and put away, Jemmy and Mr. Burney still sat yarning over their past adventures, and wondering what the future held in store for them, until just as they were about to go to bed a wonderful sight was given them. A school of whales came lumbering into the roadstead, churning up the water into creamy foam, every ripple of which was a wreath of flame. As if they knew nothing of or cared anything for the presence of the vessels at anchor they roamed ponderously about the anchorage, sometimes touching the vessels and sending tremors through them. Jemmy became quite anxious, and questioned his

friend as to the probability of a whale knocking a hole through the ship's bottom, but was soon comforted by the assurance that they were quite harmless, and were probably only looking for some place to rub their bodies against, as one sees cattle do against a fence to ease the intolerable itching caused by insects under their hair. Whales do not have insects to worry them, but certain kinds of small shell-fish, limpets and barnacles, as they are called, fasten themselves on to the blubber, and especially where, as in the humpbacked whales, the blubber is in deep folds all over the underside of the body. Many a time I have seen them dragging their huge bodies slowly backwards and forwards over the jagged surface of a coral reef, evidently enjoying the terrible scratching to the full. And Mr. Burney in explaining this to Jemmy told him an American story. When first the telegraph posts carrying the wires were erected in the prairies, where the buffalo then roamed in great herds, there were constant interruptions, owing to the poles being broken down by buffalo rubbing against them, these rough, wild cattle suffering even more than tame ones from the ravages of insects. So in order to stop this annoyance the company ordered heavier posts to be put up, with a lot of very sharp spikes sticking out several inches from them all round. The work had hardly been completed when there was a total breakdown of the telegraph service. The search-

party sent out to find the reason reported that only one telegraph pole was left standing, an immensely strong one, and that it was surrounded by a pile of dead buffaloes, upon the top of which stood the last survivor, making frantic efforts to rub himself against the last remaining spike, which was just out of his reach. Of course the story may be made up—probably it is—but it is a very good one to my mind, all the same. Jemmy and Mr. Burney sat on deck till a late hour watching with never-failing interest the wonderful brightnesses in the sea which marked the passing to and fro of the busy sea creatures, and Jemmy asked Mr. Burney quite naturally a question which has often occurred to me, but which I have never been able to get a satisfactory answer to, do the sea people—the whales and the fish—ever sleep, and if so, when? for they seem to be equally busy by night and day; only I have found, as a rule, that fish do not bite as freely at night as they do at dawn or at sunset. Of course Mr. Burney could not tell him; but that was not to be wondered at, for such knowledge is very difficult to come by, and certainly sailors are not likely to possess it. So with much reluctance, for the night was amazingly beautiful, they went to their beds, and left the *Sirius* to the care of the anchor watch.

Brightly came the morning, and all hands being on the alert at daybreak, the ship was smartened

up in the anticipation of the coming of her owners and the captain. They arrived shortly after breakfast, but professed themselves to be so delighted with the island, that they proposed to stay another day or two. Their decision was received with great delight by the curious mixture of races which make up the inhabitants of the port, for they, poor creatures, who depend almost entirely upon the visits of ships for their living, have been very hard put to it to live for some time past. Ships do not call at St. Helena as they did, since the great sailing-ship trade with the East Indies has gone; and the island having no other trade, is thus liable to become quite deserted. But the inhabitants make desperate efforts to keep on. And so the coming of a vessel like the *Sirius* is a godsend to them, for money thus spent comes to fill up many yawning gaps. What made things all the livelier was, that with their usual care for the happiness of every one on board the owners gave orders that all the men who could be spared from the vessel should be allowed ashore, and if they wanted any money, it should be given them within reason. Those who did not want to go ashore might have the boats and go fishing. In fact, as it was a pleasure cruise, so all hands might share in that pleasure, and the more they enjoyed it, the happier the owners would be. As a result of this kindly and thoughtful intimation about half of the crew went ashore and had a ramble

among the romantic glens and hills of this lonely mountain top, and the rest availed themselves of the permission to use the boats, and with natives to guide them sailed about the coast fishing. Jemmy stuck to Mr. Burney, who couldn't walk, but who could tell him all that was to be told about the island, having once had the misfortune to spend a miserable week there waiting for a ship to take him away. He could not venture out in a boat either, but he and Jemmy spent a very happy time fishing from the taffrail and talking, Jemmy asking multitudinous questions, and learning many things from the well-stored mind of his friend.

But still neither of them were sorry when all hands, including the owners and the captain, came aboard that night and confessed that they had had enough of St. Helena. And it was arranged that they should sail in the morning and make a call at Ascension, a little island in the middle of the South Atlantic, which is rated on the books of the British Admiralty as a man-of-war—surely the strangest idea that one can have, and one that we should never expect from so unromantic a body as the Board of Admiralty. So after another peaceful night the anchor was weighed in the morning at dawn, and the pretty *Sirius* glided seaward past the frowning cliffs of St. Helena into the smiling sea, the bright summer breadth of the South Atlantic, so reliable in point of weather.

This is the part of the world's ocean that deep-sea sailors of the olden days always think of with pleasure, where the sky is always bright, and the sea is always smooth, and the wind is always fair, because the ships in those latitudes were always homeward bound, the outward vessels always coming south a thousand miles to the westward. Now of course in the days of steam it doesn't matter; the ships go where they like, not where they can.

Every sail that would draw was set to the sweet steadiness of the south-east Trade winds, and the clever little ship made about eight knots an hour, with hardly a sign that she was at sea at all. And as the day drew near to a close and the usual happy evening came on with song and story, Mr. Jones, the silent one of the four owners, said to the captain as they sat in their long chairs on the quarter-deck, "There's one thing, captain, that I'm disappointed in, in fact I feel as if I've been cheated out of a grand bit of sport somehow. I want to have a whale hunt, and I haven't had a chance so far. Now, do you think there's any chance to have a go at a whale this trip? If I get back home without having that experience I shall feel that I've been had, that my cruise has been a failure. Sunken treasure's all very well, exploring islands is good, and fishing's delightful, but I want to catch a whale, and as I know you're an old whaler, I am anxious to know if we can't fix up a whale fight somehow." The skipper

answered slowly, "I can quite understand, Mr. Jones, how much you want to see this great sport, and I can promise you I won't do anything to hinder it. Of course I need not tell you how dangerous it is, especially with boats like ours, and men who don't know anything about the business, but if we do get a chance, you shall have your wish if you'll leave it to me to decide how far to go with the sport. I wouldn't have anything happen to you gentlemen that I could prevent, I mean in the way of calamity, for all that big sum of money that through you I've got lying at the bank of South Africa. But if you'll leave it to me, I'll do my best to ensure that you shall have a taste of the grandest sport in the world. I only feel sorry that we shan't be able to do anything with a whale if we kill him, and it does seem such a pity to kill those grand beasts just for the sake of killing. However please leave it to me, and if the thing can be managed, be sure that it shall be, and you will be satisfied. Good-night, gentlemen, I'm going the rounds and then turn in. Sleep is a good thing, and I feel I want it."

CHAPTER XVII

CAPTAIN BUNCE had always observed the custom in the *Sirius* ever since he had been in command of having a watch kept from the fore-topsail-yard as soon as day broke and maintained until sunset. And the watchman had orders to report anything he saw except sea and sky, from a shoal of fish to land. Thus it came about that the very next morning after the conversation last recorded, just before breakfast time, the watchman aloft shouted, "A large school of whales on the port bow, sir." There was a perfect silence for the next few seconds, and then the chief officer replied as usual, "All right." But the excitement of the young owners was very great. They were hardly able to keep quiet while the captain mounted the rigging with his glasses to see what kind of whales these visitors were. But they managed to control themselves until he came down and said quietly, "Well, gentlemen, I think you can get ready for a little sport now, because these are sperm whales. They are going the same way as we are, and evidently making a passage from one feeding ground to another, so as the wind is not too strong, we shall be some time in overtaking them. That will give

you plenty of time to get ready." While he was speaking a cry came down from aloft again, "A sail on the starboard bow, sir." Not much notice was taken of this, because they were right in the track of ships, and the *Sirius*, being a fast sailer, was sure to catch most of them up. But while they were at breakfast it was noticed that the *Sirius* gained on the stranger so rapidly, that all sorts of suggestions were made as to why she was waiting for them, as she appeared to be. That matter was settled before very long, for the powerful glasses of the skipper made her out to be a whaler lying in wait for her prey, which she had seen approaching her. Now the excitement increased, for it became evident that unless the whales took alarm and disappeared, as they sometimes do, the young sportsmen would be able to witness the way in which professional whale-hunters deal with the sovereign of the seas.

By eleven o'clock that morning the two ships had drawn close enough together to make out the smaller details of each other's rig, and the whales were in between them, apparently feeding quietly, without any idea of a terrible foe being in their near neighbourhood. Suddenly it was reported from aloft that the stranger had lowered four boats, and as soon as that was seen to be so, Captain Bunce invited the four young men to join him in the yacht's whaleboat with the boatswain in order to see the fun. They carried harpoons

and a coil of whale-line, also some lances, which Captain Bunce had brought on board from his last ship, and thus equipped, they lowered and started away, the chief officer having orders to keep a careful watch on the boat, and also to keep as near to her as the wind would permit. A lovely thrill was experienced by the young men as their light boat, propelled by six strong arms, flew over the glittering sea towards the scene of conflict. They were going to face the unknown, going into battle with the mightiest monsters left on the globe, and the idea set their blood on fire. They did not know of course that Captain Bunce had made up his mind that they should not run into any unnecessary danger, or that the killing of an inoffensive animal like a whale for no reason except sport should be allowed to put an end to what promised to be a delightful voyage.

But they knew also that they would most likely witness the full height of the great game as played by men for their bread, because he was certain that the vessel ahead was a whaler, and had sighted her prey at the same time as the *Sirius* had. And he had also a keen desire to see how the old game was played by these newcomers, who he felt sure were Americans, and of whose ability he had heard so very much. All this passed through his mind as he stood erect at the steering oar directing his boat, and watching with delight the way the gallant little craft was

springing forward at each steady thrust of the oars. Presently it seemed as if they suddenly sprang into the arena like a band of old gladiators. The whole school of whales burst into view, and in the midst of them were the four boats of the stranger, one figure standing erect in the bows of each of them, with his harpoon balanced in his hands awaiting the opportunity to strike. The captain gave a quiet order and the rowers ceased their efforts, letting the boat glide forward with the impetus she had received. Then in low tones he bade the young men watch the nearest boat. All turned to see, and in breathless silence they watched the strangers glide up alongside of a huge whale, which, all unconscious of their presence, was rolling lazily upon the sea-surface. The figure in the bows gave a ponderous swing of his harpoon, which fell from his hands, it did not seem to be thrown, upon the back of the whale, and there remained. "Fast," shouted Captain Bunce exultantly. But the harpooner calmly stooped and picked up a second harpoon from its rest and threw that after the first. It also stuck, and the whale, feeling the double wound, buried its head in the sea and lashed the surrounding waves into boiling foam with its tail. For a few minutes it seemed as if the nearest boats must be destroyed, so violent and monstrous were the struggles of the whale. The air was filled with spray, and the noise of the mighty blows upon the water

by the great tail was deafening. Suddenly it ceased, and the lookers-on saw to their amazement that the whale had disappeared, and left no trace of his great strivings for freedom but a lot of foam upon the water and a few eddies that were fast smoothing out. But they saw also that from the bows of the boat ran a line, the whale-line attached to the harpoon, which was imbedded in the body of the whale and would not tear out.

This part of the business appeared very tame, and the young men suggested to Captain Bunce that they might easily go and do the same themselves—it did not seem to want any special knowledge or training. And as they only had to sit still in the boat until the whale came up—but the questioner suddenly remembered that there might possibly be some fun when that happened, and ceased his remarks. The harpooner in the whaler's boat, who had charge of the line, had slacked it out gradually as long as the whale descended, but never allowed it to run, because he believed by keeping as much strain upon the line as possible, without pulling the boat under water, he could prevent the whale from going so fast or so far. The line had nearly half run out when the strain on it suddenly slackened, so suddenly, that it let the boat jump up as if she had been struck from underneath. Immediately the officer in charge of the boat shouted, "Stand by, haul in line, haul cheerily." They flung the line inboard

coil by coil as hard as ever they could haul, but long before they had got it all in there was a tremendous splash, and the vast body of the whale bounded to the surface like a mountain just thrown up by an earthquake. The boat with our friends was very near the spot where he rose, and as he passed her on his way, as he thought, to freedom, the boatswain, who, as you will remember, was an old whale and seal hunter, looked around at Captain Bunce for permission to strike if he got the chance. The skipper nodded, and at once the boatswain rose to his feet grasping his harpoon. The captain ordered the rowing, but very little of that was needed, for the wounded monster, blindly rushing to escape, came close past the bows of the waiting boat, and when the boatswain flung his harpoon it sank up to the hilt in the whale's side. The line ran out a little and was then held round the post in the stern of the boat by the captain, who steered his craft, now flying after the departing whale, so as to leave the whaler's boat room to come up. Over the bright sea they flew, scattering the spray on either side in snowy showers and getting excited beyond measure, all the younger members of the boat's crew, that is. For about ten minutes they tore along like this, and then as the whale slackened his speed the other boat was laboriously hauled up alongside of them, and the hoarse voice of the officer in charge was heard demanding, with much bad

language, what they meant by coming between him and his prey. Captain Bunce tried to explain, but the noise and bustle were much too great for that, and so as coolly as if it were the most ordinary thing in the world, the whalermen hauled ahead, and steering towards the *Sirius*' boat got hold of their line and cut it through.

It was done so quietly, and on proper consideration was so justifiable an act, that no one said a word, much as they were annoyed at having their sport, as they felt it, cut so suddenly short. Captain Bunce was secretly pleased of course. He had given his employers a taste of whaling, and had brought them safely out of it. He had felt very grave doubts as to his action in allowing the boatswain to strike the whale at all, but it had all turned out well, and now they were going to have a chance of seeing the whole thing, the whole great game played by the men whose business it was to play it. And while they lay on their oars, waiting to see what would happen next, another boat came flying past, fast to another whale that was spouting thick blood. It had hardly passed them when another whale towing another boat came flying by, and then indeed they felt that they were in the very middle of the fight. All round them swam the rest of the school, bewildered, not knowing which way to turn, coming right up to the boat and blinking at her with their

little eyes, as if trying to see what strange creature she was.

Then, like the opening of a fresh scene, there suddenly appeared a whale with a boat hanging on to each side of him, like dogs on the flanks of a boar, and a man in the bows of each was furiously plunging a long spear into the already sorely wounded creature. They pulled up closer to see what they felt would be the end, and getting near enough, lay on their oars and watched breathlessly. Suddenly they saw the two boats slip away, and heard shouts which the captain rightly interpreted as a warning to keep clear, for the mighty ocean monster was going to die, and needed room for his last tremendous agony. So they too pulled away and watched the whale rolling his black sides, all streaked with red, in the curdling foam around. Then they saw him rush off as if for a thousand miles' race, but after only a couple of hundred yards or so, with one gigantic effort, lifted himself clean out of the blood-stained foam around him into the air, and fell again a dead mass on the sea.

It was all over. The great fight was done. The long, black body lay like a dark bank washed by the waves without any motion of its own, and the victors closed in upon their hardly won prey. Our friends closed in too, but only as onlookers. And they were not very welcome either. This was quite natural. No one likes to be crowded

in upon or watched while they are at their work, especially if that work is of a kind where a little mistake means a very big loss. Besides, they, the whale fishers, could not help feeling that the lazy strangers, as they called them, were only amusing themselves by getting in the way. They had nothing to lose, it wasn't bread to them, and their presence there was just due to idle curiosity. Consequently when the *Sirius*' boat approached too near, in order that the young owners might see at close quarters what a sperm whale was really like, they were sternly warned off, warned too that had they caused the loss of the whale they might have been made to answer for it in a most unpleasant fashion. This unceremonious treatment offended the young men, for they had not been able to take in all that their interference in the whale-fishing might have meant to the men whose business it was. But Captain Bunce, good man, came to the rescue with a few well-chosen, peaceful words. He suggested an immediate return to the ship for rest and refreshment, and a visit to the whale ship afterwards, when they should be engaged in cutting in the whales.

So the boat's head was turned and all speed made to get on board, for the young men suddenly discovered how hungry they were. And although they still felt sore at the cutting of their line, their ill-feeling began to simmer down as they realised how their behaviour must have appeared

to the whalers. And by the time they reached the vessel they were all in high spirits again, and eager to get their meal over and visit the quaint-looking old vessel that lay lazily rolling quite near them, and whose men were toiling tremendously to get the two huge bodies of their prizes alongside. They reached the ship, and the boat was at once hoisted to her place. Jemmy looked curiously into her, as if he expected to see a whale in her bottom. He had been in a frantic state of excitement all the morning, and felt that he had been very hardly treated in not being allowed to go, although, as Mr. Burney pointed out to him, he should have remembered that it was no place for boys of his age. They only do these great deeds of whale killing or piracy in books, not in reality.

While they were at dinner the officer of the watch announced the coming of a boat from the whaler, and immediately the cabin table was deserted. Sure enough there she came, driven along by five oars, as if the rowers had just begun their work instead of having been toiling for five or six hours at the very hardest work. The boat glided alongside like a bird, a rope was caught, and the officer in the stern mounted the side, announcing himself to Captain Bunce, who met him with an outstretched hand, as Captain Macy of the *Rorqual*, whaler of New Bedford, eighteen months out, with eleven hundred barrels of sperm oil on board. He was at once invited down to

dinner and requested to allow his crew to come aboard and have some refreshments also, to both of which invitations he gave what seemed to be a rather grudging assent. A couple of the *Sirius*' crew were ordered into the boat to look after her, and the whalemén called up, objects of the most intense curiosity on the part of their hosts. Burnt almost black with the sun, that is, all but one, who was already as black as he could be by nature, and rigged up in the most extraordinary garments, all patches and different materials, they looked certainly more like pirates than anything else. But with true courtesy they were not bothered with questions until they had eaten of the plentiful good food set before them. And the way they ate made their hosts wonder. It really looked as if they had long been on short allowance; but the probable fact was, that the food they had for long been compelled to eat was of the very roughest and most unpalatable kind, and so when they found good savoury food set before them, they did the fullest justice to it.

Aft in the saloon the grim skipper, hardly less ruffianly-looking than his men, was being plied with all the delicacies they possessed, and doing also full justice to them. When at last he had finished he said, "Well, gentlemen, my mates ain't over and above pleased at the way you hung round this mornin', but I guess you're a sort of yacht, ain't ye?—out just for pleasure, and apt

to forgit that other people need to airm their livin'. Well, I forgive ye, for you've treated me white man fashion, an' now I'll just explain my errand. We're short of a few small stores, such as coffee an' sugar and medicines, an' although I was call'atin to go into Saint Helena as soon as I could work down south, we should be much helped if you c'd spare a few things, which I'll pay any reasonable rate for of course."

The young men rose in a group in their haste to protest that he was welcome to anything their storerooms contained, and as for payment—if he would only allow them to visit his ship and watch the process of cutting in the whale they would consider that ample payment for anything they could have the pleasure of supplying him with. Being a down-east Yankee of course he saw no reason why he shouldn't spoil the Egyptians when he had the chance, so he accepted the offer, and rising, guessed they had better be moving, as the work on board needed his oversight.

So promising to send at once for such stores as his steward felt inclined to order they got ready to accompany him, and in five minutes the two boats were speeding back to the whaler. Arriving alongside a curious sight met their eyes. One vast, black body was lying close to the side of the ship, secured by a stout chain round its tail to her bows; another was towing astern by

a big rope fast to its flukes in the same manner as the first; a rickety-looking stage hung over the side, upon which stood three men, all busy stabbing away at the whale's body with straight, long-handled spades, while the rest of the crew on deck was heaving away at great ropes led through pulleys to the windlass, which were lifting monstrous pieces of the whale on deck.

The smell of blood and grease was almost unbearable to these people, used to so much cleanliness, but they noted with much wonder how little notice any of the workmen seemed to take of their miserable surroundings—they were working for bread. The visitors stood in speechless wonder at the way in which those masses of blubber and flesh were handled in spite of the rolling and tumbling of the ship. And after a very few minutes of watching, they felt that the contrast between their condition and that of the workers was so great that they could not bear to continue it, and they retired, begging the captain to give them the list of his wants, which they would immediately supply as far as they could. Glad enough to get rid of them no doubt, the whaling skipper at once gave them his list, at the same time pointing out that their ship was so close that it would take but a very short time to tranship the stores. It was so; the chief officer of the *Sirius*, willing to give all hands

a closer view of this strange sea-business, which all of them had so often talked about, and only the boatswain had seen anything of, had brought his ship close alongside, and all hands were gazing intently upon the work that was going on.

The young men and their skipper, bidding a cordial good-bye and good luck to the old ship and her crew, tumbled into their boat and returned on board, feeling that they had had quite enough of whaling from what they had seen of it. But they were better even than their word, sending Captain Macy such a bountiful supply from the best of their stores, that he did not go into St. Helena for another three months, much to the distress and disgust of his hard-bitten crew.

The transfer quickly made, the yards were trimmed and the *Sirius* kept away upon her northward course, leaving the weary old *Rorqual* still struggling with her mass of grease. She was the topic of all the conversation that night both forward and aft, and Jemmy, as was his wont, sat and listened with strange attention, his mind storing up every detail for future use, although he did not realise this at the time. Eh, but it was good to feel her bounding over the blue waters again, good to know that there was another beautiful day before them, good to sing or listen to songs as they lay on deck well fed and happy.

But I fear I am giving you a wrong idea of sea life by writing like this. Only under very exceptional circumstances do seamen have such a good time as our friends had in the *Sirius*, and that you should know, so that you may not think life at sea is all fun and enjoyment. Indeed it is far from that, but it is just the life to bring out all the manly, self-reliant qualities that a fellow should have.

The second day after meeting with the *Rorqual* they sighted Ascension, a lonely barren peak rising out of the sea, looking as if it belonged to a dead world. As they drew nearer Mr. Burney pointed out to Jemmy how the lava rocks had been washed and worn by ceaseless beating of the waves into all sorts of fantastic shapes, and how they bristled with needle-like points, presenting a hopeless landing-place for any so unfortunate as to try and gain a foothold there. Coral is bad to try and land on, but wave-worn lava is worse, and I have never seen it so savage-looking anywhere as at Ascension. Nearer and nearer they drew, opening out point after point of the same fierce and rugged character, while over the broken peaks behind hovered heavy-laden clouds, looking as if they would like to unload their weight of water upon this spot of land, but for some reason did not. All around the sky was of that lovely celestial blue always found within the limits of the Trade winds, which

made the contrast all the more noticeable. And Mr. Burney told Jemmy a yarn of the old days, how for some offence on board a man-of-war a sailor was sentenced to be "marooned," that is, to be left upon a desert island to die. It was one of the awful punishments so freely inflicted in those bad old days, now, thank God, gone for ever from us.

What the man's crime was I do not know, but he was put ashore with one week's provisions, a knife, a flint and steel for making fire, and an old double-barrelled shot-gun. The ship sailed away and left him, and some months afterwards a vessel calling found his skeleton with the gun lying by its side, and from obvious signs he had died from thirst, for the island was waterless. But it has often been pointed out that with a little knowledge of chemistry, such as I suppose every boy now has before he leaves school, he might have made himself some water, enough, at any rate, to keep him alive for a long time. He could have filled one of the many hollows in the rocks with sea water, covered it in with canvas (he had a bag which contained his food), and used his gun barrel to lead the stream away into either another hole or a pot, where the condensed steam would have dripped in the shape of priceless fresh water. But, you may say, "You haven't said how he could make the water boil?" No more I have, but that is very simple. Make a

big fire and drop pebbles, large ones, into it. Presently take them out with a couple of sticks and drop them into your cold water. You will soon make it boil, for the stones hold a great amount of heat. In fact I have boiled potatoes in a wooden tub in this way, a feat which would at first sight appear impossible without the aid of steam.

Suddenly they rounded a sharp point and entered a compact little harbour, at the head of which rose a steep, conical hill, looking quite artificial, from a flagstaff on the summit of which floated the British Naval Ensign. Their anchor was hardly down before a smartly-handled boat was alongside. A keen-faced officer mounted the side and demanded their business, for this being a purely Naval station they are rightly very jealous of the coming in of merchant ships unless driven by sheer necessity, such as sickness or hunger. But it did not take long to satisfy the officer, and he immediately gave the owners a cordial invitation ashore to visit the captain of the port, who, he said, would hail their coming as a godsend in this lonely place. Then he departed, well pleased to inform his superior of the coming visit, and the ship having been made neat and tidy, all hands were dismissed to enjoy themselves in their several ways, excepting the crew of the boat which would presently take the captain and owners ashore.

She was all ready to depart, when, seeing Jemmy standing wistfully looking on, Mr. Smith told him he might come also, giving him a perfect pang of delight. And so the boat pushed off for the shore.

CHAPTER XVIII

It is only about half a mile from the anchorage to a little mole at the landing-place, so that it seemed as if they had but just got into their rowing swing when the boat arrived. Not quite, for when they would have landed they saw that although the sea had looked as smooth as a mill pond while they were coming ashore, it had sufficient of the great Atlantic swell in it to make it dash against the rocks at the landing-place with fearful force. In fact it became necessary to drop an anchor and slack the boat in towards the shore until near enough to catch a line thrown to them, then exercising the utmost care to prevent the boat being dashed against the rocky mole. So it was necessary to leave a couple of hands in the boat to haul her off to her anchor, since she could not possibly lie alongside the mole—she would have been knocked to pieces in five minutes.

While the captain and owners went off to the Governor's house, the rest of the crew were hospitably entertained by the smaller officials, who showed them the great storehouses, the condens-

ing machinery (for making fresh water out of salt), and the repairing shops, this being a sort of half-way house for British men-of-war in the middle of the South Atlantic Ocean. But mostly they plied the newcomers with questions. They felt so cut off from the delights of home, so "out of everything," as one man put it, that it was like being in prison. And the general opinion being that there was nothing at all in the interior of the island worth risking a stroke from the blazing sun to go and see, they decided to lay by and talk to one another, exchange yarns and ideas until evening, when they might go to a beach near by and catch a few turtle, this being one of the favourite spots for these curious reptiles to come and deposit their eggs, and in consequence a favourite spot for catching the valuable creatures.

Sheltered from the sun, and in the full enjoyment of ice-cool drinks of lemonade and ginger-beer (they made their own ice there of course), the visitors and their entertainers were having a really good time, when a shout from a watcher outside the house brought them all rushing out, and one word passed from mouth to mouth, "The rollers, the rollers." Of course it meant nothing to Jemmy, and very little to his shipmates, but as they ran down to the landing-place he felt full of fear, felt sure that something dreadful was going to happen. But everybody was so excited

that no explanation was offered, and as it turned out none was needed. The subject of terror soon became plain enough. Looking out of the little bay to sea, it appeared as if the ocean had raised itself in a great ridge of smooth water against the sky, which was rushing towards them as if it must flood the land, destroying everything in its path. Yet it fascinated the watchers, held them to the spot as if they were fastened down. The *Sirius* lay, a lonely little object, between them and the oncoming terror, and it looked as if she must be swept to destruction before it. Fortunately their suspense did not last long. They saw it reach her, saw her rise high in the air, and then disappear behind the roaring roll of water, which a minute later struck the shore and hurled masses of spray fifty feet into the air. The noise and the spray departed, leaving a clear view of the bay again, and showing the *Sirius* still safe. But away to seaward of her came another long hill of water even higher than the first, towering up till it appeared as if it shut off half the sky. Gasping words of sympathy were heard from all as they realised the immense danger in which the little ship and her gallant crew lay, a danger which no human power or foresight could turn away! There was just one gleam of comfort though, as before, it did not last long. The vast wave rushed shoreward almost at the speed of an express train.

Again they saw it reach the vessel, saw her spring into the air as it were, lost sight of her, and almost immediately the enormous mass of water struck the land with such force that the solid rocks trembled as if in an earthquake, and the white clouds of foam rose into the air almost like sheets of water, hiding everything from view.

When they subsided again the *Sirius* was still afloat, but so near to the rocks that it seemed as if she must drive ashore if another wave struck her; so close, that the movements of the men about her decks could be easily distinguished by the naked eye. But those good fellows on board had not neglected any of the means at their disposal for the saving of the ship, so that when the third wave did come, being much smaller than the two previous ones, it found her held by three anchors, two of which had enormous ropes attached to them instead of chain, which gave so much more spring that there was little danger of their breaking. At any rate they held, and when the wave did pass the *Sirius* was still safe, although she was not fifty yards from the rocks. And as soon as that wave spent its strength, the anxious watchers ashore could see that all hands on board were busy running out kedge anchors to warp the vessel out to a safe anchorage again. The terrible experience was over.

Naturally those of the *Sirius*' crew who had never experienced this wonderful phenomenon of

the "rollers" were full of curiosity as to the "why" of it, but they could get no answer. Nobody seemed to know ; nobody really does know whether it is what is called a tidal wave, or whether it is caused by an earthquake beneath the sea, or a hurricane blowing far away. All they knew was that these tremendous waves did roll in like that sometimes, always without any warning, and they were generally fatal to any small vessels lying at anchor either in St. Helena or Ascension. And a great feeling of thankfulness took possession of the boat's crew of the *Sirius*, especially of Jemmy, who felt that if she had been lost he would have lost everything in the world worth living for.

Captain Bunce and the owners had been watching the scene with full hearts, and when it was evident that all danger was over for the present, they paid their respects to the Governor and said they wanted to get away. Much as they would have liked to have witnessed the capture of some turtle, they did not dare to remain and risk the lives of their friends on board, even if, as they were assured, it was most unlikely that any more rollers would be experienced again for another year. So, much to the relief of the boat's crew, the order was given to haul the boat in and they would return. The reason why the boat had not been destroyed was that she was protected from the inrush of the waves by an enormous boulder of rock, between which and the shore she lay.

It broke the force of the incoming wave, and the backwash was not powerful enough to tear the boat from the grip of the rope which held her to the shore.

She came in gaily now and took her crew on board, and amid a whole tempest of good wishes and good-byes they pushed off for the ship, full of anxiety to know how their brethren had fared during their absence, and full of gratitude also that the ship and her valuable crew had been spared. They reached the side and climbed on board, to find everything as it should be; there was no sign of anything having happened out of the common, and when the captain congratulated the chief officer on his careful handling of the ship under such trying conditions, that gentleman modestly denied having done anything extraordinary, and said that all was due to the grand seaworthiness of the ship.

Joyfully the men obeyed the call to "Man the windlass," and cheerily the anchor came up. The sails were hoisted and sheeted home with a rush, and the beautiful *Sirius* glided out of that dangerous little bay, every man on board feeling as if he had been specially protected by Providence from either going down with the vessel, or being left stranded for a long time with the sad knowledge that his dear chums were lost. How delightful to feel her heeling to the fresh Trade! How home-like everything on board seemed, and how

hearty were the songs that night—the note of thankfulness, of rejoicing, was in every one of them. I should like to close my description of the day with a night picture, if I may, hoping that my young friends will be able to see with their mind's-eye as they read.

The wide circle of the sea is deeply blue, just touched in every little space with green fire. The line where sea ends and sky begins is hardly to be seen, but just above it stars begin to show, and a little higher they burn like points of electric light. There are no clouds, even the usual Trade wind clouds have gone, and the wind blows so steadily that the ship has scarcely any motion. Her white sails gleam ghostly, but there is no tremble in them. A soft sound is heard of the parted waters, and looking overside there is a glow along the vessel's sides and at her bows, where her gentle, gliding motion stirs up the light-bearers of the deep; while looking over the stern and down into the depths, one can almost see the outline of the keel, with thousands of ghostly little fires dancing, brightening, and fading all about it, and streaming away astern as the vessel passes on. There is a lovely freshness in the air, making one feel glad to be alive, and when the moon rises, oh, the beauty of the scene is beyond all words—that flood of silver light let loose upon the sea has made all things glorious by its magic touch, especially the ship herself,

which now looks like a triple column of frosted silver under a strong light.

Yes, the nights are lovely and so are the days, and it is hard indeed to say which is loveliest. But one must have time to admire, and so it is that the glories of the night linger longest in the memory of the sailor, because he has then nothing to distract his attention from the beautiful scene, and if he be at the wheel or on the look-out, he will be glad to admire to pass the time away. But in the day-time, with so much work doing and so short a time of rest for the watch below, it is hard indeed to snatch a few minutes in which to admire the wonder and glory of the sea and sky. One word more on this subject and I will get on with the yarn. Some people are born with eyes to see the beautiful, and hearts to love it. And others have to learn to see and feel. But it is a habit of great value which all can acquire if they care to, the habit of admiration and appreciation of God's most wonderful works. Jemmy was especially favoured, for he had ever at his elbow in his hours of leisure his wise friend Mr. Burney pointing out this, that, and the other beauty and wonder. And when Jemmy sometimes artlessly asked how it was his friend knew so much about the hidden mysteries of the sea, he was told that it was only since his being crippled that he had turned his attention to these things. He had seen

them before of course, but had not noticed them ; he had loved them in a way, but had not cared to speak about them ; but now he found his greatest comfort in calling up all he knew about the sea and its marvellous beauty and charm, especially when he had some one to talk to about it who was so eager to hear and ready to learn as Jemmy was.

The beautiful south-east Trades faltered at last, grew weaker and weaker, until they died away in a perfect calm. The sea became like milk, and the vessel lay almost motionless—almost, I say, because there is always in the calmest sea a gentle rolling motion that moves, ever so gently, the mightiest ship. It comes perhaps from a gale blowing three thousand miles away, or from some curious disturbance far below in the darksome deeps of which we know next to nothing ; but whatever be the cause, motion is always there ; and so when you read that wonderful poem, “ The Ancient Mariner,” and come across the lines—

“ We stuck, nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean,”

you will know it is an example of what is called poetic licence—a figure of speech, like talking about a boy being “ cut to pieces ” when he has had six strokes with the cane, such as most of us have experienced. A ship is never really perfectly steady

except when in dock. Then there was great fun, for the boat was lowered, and all sorts of strange living things were caught and examined, to the intense interest and delight, not only of the owners, but everybody on board, none of whom had ever had such opportunities of studying the natural history of the sea before except Mr. Burney and Jemmy when in the *Samaritan*. And the swimming was something to remember. In that lukewarm water the men could, and did, disport themselves for hours without feeling weary; and as for the fear of sharks, well, the splashing and shouting was enough to scare any sharks out of their wits who would have dared to come within a mile of the ship.

The calm lasted nearly a week, and no one felt weary of it, for all kept thoroughly amused and happy. And to add to their interest, one morning at daybreak a big homeward bound sailing-ship was seen near them, having come up in the night in that mysterious, creepy way in which floating things do come together at sea. Of course they visited her, finding that she came from Shanghai, and had been so long on the journey that the provisions and water were running very low, so they were able to help and bring comfort and renewed health to the much-tried crew, who felt the long calm to be a calamity of the worst kind.

The relief came just in time, for that same night began the "doldrums," which means the

most unpleasant weather imaginable, except that it isn't cold. The wind comes in uneasy gusts from apparently all quarters at once; mighty masses of cloud draw up thousands of tons of water from the sea, carrying it steadily along, and every now and then letting it fall in almost solid blocks of water upon the sea beneath with a roar as of five or six Niagaras all rushing over their precipices together. And to get out of this uncomfortable neighbourhood the sailors have to be constantly on the watch to trim the sails and to take advantage of every breath of wind in order to get their ship forward on her course. Their hands get soft with the wet, and the ropes, being hard, come to hurt at last, as they are pulled upon, like bars of hot iron.

Fortunately the *Sirius* was clean and smart, feeling the slightest impulse given her by the wind, and therefore it was only a few days before, with a steady northerly wind, she crossed the Line and headed directly for Barbados, that pretty little jewel of an island set in the South Atlantic far east of all the others, like an out-lying post of the great American Continent. Gradually they left all the dirty weather behind them and sailed into bright blue skies and sparkling seas again, until one morning at daybreak they made out the beautiful island ahead; and the breeze growing stronger as they neared the land, they came up to the anchorage in style, in company

with one of the fine steamers of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company's service bearing letters from England only twelve days' old. The roadstead of Carlisle Bay was fairly full of ships, but in that pleasant region no gales are to be feared, so the *Sirius* had no difficulty in finding a good berth, although it was rather far from the shore. Down went the anchor, and round swung the good ship to it; her sails were made fast, her decks were cleared up, and the young gentlemen, as keen and ready as naval officers are, were ready to go ashore at once.

As the handsome gig, manned by six of the smartest men in the ship, sped away to the landing-place Jemmy looked wistfully after her, for, boy-like, he felt that he would dearly like to see this new, strange land, so very new and strange indeed to him. But he was soon interested in other things around, and especially when Mr. Burney hobbled up and began to talk to him about the early days of the West Indies. And then they fell to criticising the appearance of the various vessels at anchor, clumsy old barques, smart clipper ships, ugly, squat-looking tramp steamers flying German, Italian, and English flags, and well inshore some beautiful yacht-like steamers belonging to the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, waiting to convey the tourists pleasure-seeking and the mails all around the islands, with which these seas are thickly studded.

Among the ships lying near the *Sirius* was a large barque, evidently of North American build, but looking to a seaman's eye as if she were poorly kept, as if indeed she were a sea-beggar. There are many of them even now afloat, although it seems funny how a poor man can own a ship. But if a ship is all the business a man has got, and her expenses are almost the same as her earnings, I'm sure you can see how poor her owner may easily be, and how very hard he may find it to keep that ship going which he cannot sell, or lose, or give away. As long as he owns her she is an expense to him, and unless she can earn something, she is very likely to bring him to ruin.

This ship, the *Julia Snow*, of Windsor, Nova Scotia, looked like one of that sort, for even her sides, which should have been black, were weather-bleached until they were almost white; evidently the owner could not afford paint to put on them. Mr. Burney had a great deal to say about her and the kind of life led by those on board, and then getting his glasses he suddenly said, "Well, the skipper of her has one comfort at any rate; he has his wife and family with him. Look, Jemmy," and he handed the boy the glasses; "it's washing day; d'ye see all the children's clothes hanging out? Ah well, as long as a man's got those he loves near him, nothing else matters very much if he can only keep them from downright

hunger, and thirst, and cold." And Jemmy looked at his friend uncomprehendingly because he could not understand what this love of parents for children meant. All the love and care he could remember came from strangers, for his poor old granny was quite forgotten.

Suddenly Mr. Burney, who had been gazing long and earnestly through the glasses at the vessel, started violently and exclaimed, "Why, Jemmy, look, there are some old friends of ours," at the same time handing Jemmy the glasses. Jemmy peeped through them tremblingly, he didn't know why, and as soon as he had adjusted the focus he looked earnestly at the *Julia Snow's* poop, and saw there in a little group Mrs. Wilson, Eddie, and Freda. He very nearly dropped the glasses in his excitement, and turning to his friend said, "Oh please, sir, it's Mrs. Wilson and the children. Can't we go aboard and see them? I would like to." That was a matter easily arranged, for it was a standing order that Mr. Burney should be treated as a favoured passenger, so he had only to mention his wish for a boat to have it gratified, as also the request that Jemmy might be allowed to come with him.

So in five minutes they were on their way to board the old barque, and when they were yet a hundred yards away the sharp eyes of the children had discovered them, and hailed them with shrieks of joy. The boat bumped alongside, and Jemmy

scrambled up, his legs shaking under him, to be received by Mrs. Wilson and the children as if he were one of themselves, who had been dead and suddenly come to life again. It was such a joyful meeting that they almost forgot Mr. Burney, who had a painfully difficult job to drag himself up the old-fashioned side-ladder, a rude way of getting on board at the best of times, but very hard indeed for a cripple. But as soon as Mrs. Wilson saw him she bade him welcome so warmly, that even if his gentle heart had felt any sense of neglect, it would have passed away at once. It was a happy meeting. The children were almost wild with delight and made such a noise that any reasonable conversation was impossible, all three of them, for Jemmy was just as childish as the two young Wilsons, being quite beside themselves with joy. The two elders looked upon them indulgently, and waited patiently till their first transports should subside before any explanations as to the why or how of this wonderful meeting should be entered upon. And at last, as the youngsters seemed worn out with excitement, the gentle lady suggested that Eddie and Freda should show Jemmy round the ship and allow Mr. Burney to tell her quietly all that had happened since their sad separation in Cape Town nearly a year ago.

They joyfully agreed, and rushed off, leaving Mrs. Wilson to invite Mr. Burney below into the cabin. As they went down he noted the bare, poverty-

stricken appearance of everything, and was therefore quite ready to hear her say, "I am sorry, Mr. Burney, that I can't offer you any refreshment. We are so dreadfully poor, that we have to stint ourselves of common necessaries, and I can assure you that the crew live quite as well, if not better, than we do. But I'll tell you all about it when I've heard your story." Of course Mr. Burney answered her that he did not want anything to eat or drink, but did not make much of it for delicacy's sake, and at once started to tell her in as few words as possible the story of his adventures up till the time of Jemmy hailing him on the quay of Cape Town docks. The story of Jemmy's adventures took him longer naturally, and evoked many an exclamation of wonder from Mrs. Wilson, who had hard work to keep from breaking in upon the tale to express her amazement at the wonderful good fortune that had befallen the youngster.

When he had finished the story she said with a sigh, "Ah, Mr. Burney, I am afraid our experiences are also sad, as yours have been. As you know, my husband engaged to take the beautiful *Samaritan* back to England, and of course we all had hopes that we might still be able to remain in her. But when we reached Plymouth, where he had been ordered to take her, and he reported himself to the agents, he was told that she was to be sold for the closing up of Mr. Smith's accounts. He was paid

most liberally, and more than that, he was handed a thousand pounds, which Mr. Smith had left him, apparently, in the last moment of his life. And there we were adrift again. Of course we thought of going back to Nova Scotia, but before we had made any arrangements we had an offer of this ship. She had been laid up in Plymouth for a long time, couldn't get a freight, and the owner, who had been an old friend of my husband's, was at his wit's end to know what to do with her, for he was quite a poor man.

"So at last we decided to buy a half share in her as she was going so very cheap, and try whether we could not earn a living in her somehow. At any rate we should all be together, and my husband would be master indeed, for Mr. Spicer, the other owner, was willing to leave the whole management to him. Well, we closed the bargain, and not long afterwards we sailed for Cardiff, having obtained a charter to carry a cargo of coal to Hong-Kong at a very low rate, but one that would pay expenses and leave something over. Of course we had a hard job to get away from Plymouth; there were so many bills to pay, and ready-money was so hard to get, but at last we managed it, and in about three weeks were on our way south with eleven hundred tons of coal on board at a freight of £900.

"We had a very long passage, for our gear is so poor that we have to be most careful in carrying

sail, lest we should do any damage which we could hardly pay to have repaired, but we arrived out there safely without mishap. And then when we had discharged our cargo we found that we could get nothing to take back or take anywhere. We could not stay in port, for expenses were heavy, and just as we were about to leave, my poor husband, almost in despair, got a charter to take five hundred Chinese to Peru. I won't try to tell you of that trip. It seems like a horrible nightmare. But, thank God, we managed to get to Callao safely and land four hundred and fifty out of the five hundred passengers we had brought. The rest were dead. Captain Wilson was worn to a thread through anxiety, but soon picked up again when we got rid of our awful freight. And then, as there was nothing at all to be got in the way of freight, either guano or nitrate, Captain Wilson decided to come here in the hope of getting a charter to take mahogany home to England or the States, about all the poor old barque is fit for—not but what she is a good ship, but she wants money spent on her, and that we haven't got. Still, we've got each other and good health, and although we live like paupers, we don't mind that as long as we don't get into debt. And that's all I think, except that my husband is again getting anxious, as the charter he has been anxiously expecting doesn't come along. Forgive me, dear old friend,

for telling you such a grey old story, but I expect it is a very commonplace one after all. And in any case, we are far better off than you, who have indeed been hardly used in the battle of life."

CHAPTER XIX

MR. BURNLEY was about to reply, when Jemmy came quietly into the cabin, followed by the two children. They were tired out, having raced all over the ship, and behaved themselves generally like young kittens at play. As soon as she saw Jemmy, Mrs. Wilson called him and said, "Now, my boy, if Eddie and Freda have done with you for a little while, I'd like to talk to you. How are you, dear, and how have you been enjoying yourself? I look upon you as if you were my own boy, you know, ever since you saved my child's life." Jemmy, blushing and confused, looked first at Mr. Burnley and then at the lady, stammering out at last, "Thank ye, ma'am, I've enjoyed myself very much; everybody's been very kind to me, and Mr. Burnley says I'm getting on with my sea training very well. I'm very happy aboard of the *Sirius*, but I'm sorry I'm not here with you." "Ah, my boy," sighed Mrs. Wilson, "you'd find a great difference being in this poor old ship from being in a yacht like yours and having everything you want. We're very poor here, Jemmy, and don't have many nice things to eat, I can tell you. In fact, we're almost like

beggars working our way about the world and trying hard to get a living." At this Jemmy brightened up at once and said, "Why then, perhaps I can help. Hasn't Mr. Burney told you that I've got a lot of money in the bank at Cape Town?" "No, Jemmy," replied Mrs. Wilson, "but what about that? Your money is your own, dear lad, and you must save it for when you grow up to be a man."

There was silence for a minute or two as Jemmy looked from one to the other, and then with a great effort he said, "I'd like to lend Captain Wilson my money if he'd take Mr. Burney and me with him. I like the gentlemen in the *Sirius*, they've all been very kind to me, but I like you and Freda and Eddie better. And I think if I could only be with you and Mr. Burney I should like that better than anything. And you might be able to do something with my money that would make things better for you. I don't know if it would be enough, but I'd like you to have it, I know that." Mrs. Wilson looked at Mr. Burney inquiringly, and he said slowly and impressively, "This boy has got twelve thousand pounds in the bank at Cape Town, and he thinks no more of it than if it were only a shilling or two. I never saw such an unselfish little chap. It's hard to know what we ought to do, except to see that he is not taken advantage of in any way. Such a large sum is

so great a temptation to people, and especially as he doesn't seem to set any value on it at all." But Jemmy broke in here, saying, "Please, Mr. Burney, let me speak. I wouldn't give my money away to anybody strange, for you've taught me to keep my weather-eye lifting for strangers. But you and Freda and Eddie and Captain Wilson and Mrs. Wilson are all the friends I've got in the world, and I want to be with you. And I know you'll do more good with the money than I could. And perhaps—I've been told I'm always lucky, and I think I am—I shall bring you luck, and we shall all be very happy together. I'm quite tired of the old *Sirius*, and like this funny old ship much better." Panting with excitement, Jemmy finished, while the old mate and Mrs. Wilson looked at one another unable to speak.

While they stared at each other, the sound of a boat was heard coming alongside, steps were heard on deck, and Captain Wilson came down into the cabin. His astonishment was very great at seeing Mr. Burney and Jemmy of course, but nothing compared to what he felt when he was told of all that had passed. Indeed it was almost too much for him, and he turned pale and faint. The prospect of being helped out of the worst of his anxieties was so pleasant, and the relief was so great, that he could hardly bear it. But then he recovered himself and said, "No, Jemmy, no, my dear, it won't do. We can't take advantage

of this dear boy's generous innocence and ignorance like that. Everybody would cry shame on us, and quite right too. But what a fine, big-hearted little chap it is, to be sure. I'm proud to have known him."

Then at last Mr. Burney spoke and said, "Captain Wilson, I've been thinking about this while you and Mrs. Wilson have been talking, and I've made up my mind that you will be doing no wrong to him or yourselves in accepting his offer. I am really responsible for him, for Captain Bunce has refused to be his trustee, and if you don't mind being burdened with a cripple passenger, I should like very much to come with you, for somehow, in spite of the kindness of everybody aboard the yacht, I don't feel at my ease there. What I propose is this. Let Jemmy buy out your partner and advance enough money to do what is necessary to make this vessel seaworthy, and we'll all start fresh. He'll be happy, I know. I shall be happy, too, in the knowledge that a deserving man and his family have been helped in a time of great need, and I really believe that it will be a good investment for some of Jemmy's money—it won't take more than a third of it anyhow, and the rest can lie still at two and a half per cent. in the bank."

There was silence for a little time, a heavy silence, in which everybody was thinking hard, especially Captain Wilson, who was desperately

anxious to do right, and much afraid of being tempted to do what he would be ashamed of afterwards. The silence was broken by Jemmy bursting out impulsively with, "Please, Captain Wilson, do listen to Mr. Burney; I feel sure he's right, and I do so want to come with you." Captain Wilson's eyes were dim as he answered, "Very well, my boy, I'll ask the owners of the *Sirius* and Captain Bunce what they think of it, and be guided by their opinion. I can't say more than that, and I think we had better not say any more about the matter at all just now. Let's go on deck and talk about Jemmy's adventures; it's too hot down here."

So with that they all went on deck, and, sitting under the awning, they drew the boy out, while he told of his eventful cruise in the *Ione* and afterwards in the *Sirius*, Eddie and Freda sitting on each side of him, and listening so earnestly that they hardly breathed. The time slipped away rapidly, as it will when you are interested, but at last Jemmy came to an end of his wonderful yarn, and Captain Wilson, drawing a long breath, said, "Well, they say that the days of adventure are over, but this young man seems to have had his share anyhow. But I suppose it will be a good many years before he sees how fully packed with adventure his last two years have been. And the best of it is, that his wonderful luck doesn't seem to have done him

harm; he's just the same bright, clean-minded boy that he was when we first met him in the old Italian ship." Jemmy squirmed uneasily at this, for no boy worth his salt likes to be praised to his face, and, creeping to his feet, went to the rail, followed by the two youngsters, who seemed as if they couldn't bear to lose touch of him for a moment. He had hardly reached the rail when he cried out, "Oh, Mr. Burney, there's our gentlemen just going aboard. Shan't we go and see about coming with Captain Wilson. I do want it done; please come, sir." Mr. Burney exchanged glances with Captain Wilson and his wife, as much as to say, "You see there is no alteration in the boy's mind; he won't be satisfied till this thing is settled." Then aloud he said, "All right, my lad. Captain Wilson, will you come with us; it is better that we should know how we stand as soon as possible."

So they got into the boat and shoved off, reaching the *Sirius* while the young owners were still on deck and talking vigorously about the sights they had seen ashore. Mr. Burney hobbled up to them, and respectfully asked if he might introduce his friend the captain of the old barque over there, and if possible have a few minutes' conversation with them and Captain Bunce over a matter of business. "Of course, of course," said Mr. Smith; "glad to see you, Captain Wilson; come on below, and have some

refreshment," and they all trooped down into the pretty saloon, Jemmy following timidly behind, as little unlike the important person he really was just then as you could imagine. They soon settled down, and Mr. Burney plunged right into the important subject on hand, being listened to with the deepest attention by the four young gentlemen and Captain Bunce until he had told all his tale up to Jemmy's proposition for the disposal of his future. When he had finished they looked at one another in silence for a minute or two, until Mr. Smith said, "Well, Captain Bunce, I think this is another question for you to decide, for you really know the boy better than we do, and are better able to judge altogether."

Then Captain Bunce, clearing his throat, replied, "Gentlemen, I have every confidence in Mr. Burney, and I know he is the boy's best friend. We might interfere and do harm. I think we should leave it to the man who has earned the right, if any man has, to be considered the boy's guardian, to say what the boy should do with the wealth he owns. Some one must speak for the boy, and act for him too, and I know of no one who can do both better than Mr. Burney. I shall be sorry to part with the boy, for he is a fine little chap, and, I believe, has the makings of a splendid man in him, but I don't think we ought to stand in the way of

his doing so generous a thing as this for those he is fond of."

"Then that settles it," said Mr. Smith. "And I think, Jemmy, that you're a brick, and I am proud to have known you." There was a suspicious break in the young man's voice as he spoke, and his three friends looked rather red about the eyes too, but, being young Englishmen, they made no fuss, except that they jumped up, and, collaring Jemmy, had a regular romp with him, to let off steam I suppose, in case they should break down. But Mr. Smith interrupted the game by saying, "Now, Captain Wilson, it's too late to-day to go into the business part of the matter, but if you'll honour us with your company to dinner, and be so good as to bring Mrs. Wilson and your children with you, it will give us a great deal of pleasure, and we'll try and have a jolly evening. Now don't, for goodness' sake, make any objection, but come, just as you are; we don't put on any frills unless we have got swell company, and even then we hate it. You see we have been out of polite society for a long time, except our own."

Captain Wilson looked from one to the other in almost comically helpless fashion, but seeing how good and sincere they all were, he only replied, "Very well, gentlemen, it shall be as you say, but you'll allow me to go now and get them ready."

"Certainly, certainly, captain," shouted the gay young fellows; "off you go, and hurry back; we're just hungry to see those kiddies of yours, and have a rag with them." And they jovially bundled him out of the cabin.

I leave you to guess how Captain Wilson was received when he got back on board his own ship, how crazy with delight his youngsters were, and how desperately concerned Mrs. Wilson was at not being able to make herself smart enough, as she thought. She raised all sorts of objections, as ladies will, but they were all swept aside by her husband in true man fashion, man who hasn't got any frills to put on, and doesn't understand how serious a matter it is for a lady, especially on board a ship, and with a limited wardrobe, to make herself look her best. Dear me, they were busy for the rest of the time left, especially as it was very hard to keep those two youngsters quiet for a minute. But punctually at six o'clock they arrived on board the *Sirius*, being received with as much courtesy and kindness as if they were a Royal family coming to honour the yacht with a visit, and in three minutes Mrs. Wilson was at her ease, besides being deeply impressed with the homage that was being paid her. A beautifully appointed state-room was placed at her disposal, with everything that she might be supposed to need, and she was charmed with all the arrangements, saying

how much they reminded her of the beautiful *Samaritan*.

What a glorious evening they had, to be sure. Mrs. Wilson played the piano splendidly, and was delighted at the opportunity. She had so long wanted to have a turn at one (for of course they had no piano on board the *Julia Snow*). The young men sang and danced, and behaved indeed like a lot of hearty school-boys just let loose until they were thoroughly tired, and then they sat around on deck and told stories in the balmy moonlight, with the strange tropical scents being wafted off to them from the shore, and the gentle murmur of the surf lulling all things into deepest peace. It was a time of almost perfect happiness for all; and when at last it became absolutely necessary to break up, they felt that this evening would be remembered all their lives long. Preparations were made for departure, but it took quite a search to find the children. They were at last discovered, with Jemmy between them, coiled up in a snug corner fast asleep, literally worn out with romping and pleasure. And then Mr. Smith suggested that it would be a pity to spoil the evening by leaving. Captain Wilson might send a message to his mate to say that he would not be on board that night, and they might retire to the cabin already allotted to them and try and make themselves comfortable. It did not take much persuasion to make them agree to this. The

message was sent, and all the guests were soon wrapped in peaceful sleep, full of happiness, as they deserved to be.

With the morning everybody rose with many plans for the future, and, what was more, full of hope that they would be able to carry them out. Jemmy was perhaps the most excited, even the happiest, of them all, because he had the most delightful of all feelings, that of doing kindness for love's sake. Now, if there's one thing more than another I am anxious to avoid, it is that which all healthy-minded boys dislike, and that is being preached at, yet I must just say that, as a hint to you how to be happy, do all you can for other people, and forget yourself. It is the surest way to be jolly and happy that I know of, or of which I have ever heard. And Jemmy was just now full of that satisfaction, so full, that he felt he wanted to run, and jump, and make a noise. But everybody concerned being anxious to get matters settled, as soon as breakfast was over Mrs. Wilson and the children returned on board the old barque, and Captain Wilson, Mr. Burney, and Mr. Smith, taking Jemmy with them, went ashore. On reaching the landing-place they went straight to the people who attend to that kind of business and set the cable working to South Africa, while the necessary agreements between Jemmy, Mr. Burney, and Captain Wilson were prepared and signed.

Then the old barque was unmoored and brought

up the "Canash," as the little river at Bridgetown is called, and put into the hands of workmen for a thorough overhaul, and all kinds of new stuff in the way of sails and stores ordered for her. But of course Jemmy soon got tired of these dry business details, and he was overjoyed when Mr. Burney suggested that they should get a carriage and go for a drive over to the other side of the island, only Jemmy stipulated that Mrs. Wilson and the children should come too. So as soon as ever it could be managed off they went, the youngsters almost crazy with delight at the strange sights and sounds on every hand, and the black people standing still to look at them as they passed, making all sorts of quaint remarks about the behaviour of the "buckra pickneys," as they called the white children. It was no easy task to keep the youngsters in the carriage as it rolled slowly along, the blazing flowers, the funny little groups of black and dead-white children mixed that you will not see anywhere else but in Barbados, and the fields of sugar-cane skirting the roads, without any hedges such as we have in England. They enjoyed themselves so much that by the time they got to their journey's end, the Crane Hotel, on the other side of the island, they were tired and glad to lie down on the beautiful lawn looking over the sea from the high cliffs and enjoy the sight of the bright sea and the passing ships.

A plentiful, pleasant meal followed, after which,

while Mr. Burney and Mrs. Wilson talked over the great change in their prospects, Jemmy and the two children, guided by a black man who was as full of fun as they were, scrambled down the steep steps cut in the rocks on to the beach. Such a beach! wide, white, and smooth, with great waves rolling up on it and spreading themselves in a creamy foam along its shining sands. Nobody to say don't, miles of that beautiful white floor to scamper or roll upon, and, most splendid of all, to run bravely out after the retreating waves and scamper shrieking back when the next big billow came booming in as if it intended rolling right over them. Of course they got wet and gritty, even their hair was full of sand, but that made it all the nicer. Of course they made the scuttling little crabs very unhappy by chasing them into their holes and digging them out, little tangles of legs and claws, and snatching them up, flinging them far out into the surf.

But before they had quite worn themselves out a shrill whistle from the cliffs recalled them, and back they went, feeling that they had indeed had a good time. They were pretty objects, I can tell you, when they presented themselves before Mrs. Wilson, but she took no notice, knowing that sea-water doesn't give colds or rheumatism, and that sand shakes off. Then they all bundled into the carriage to a regular chorus of farewells from all the servants at the hotel, who seemed as

if they had enjoyed the visit as much as the children. A perfect drive back followed, the pleasant sense of being healthily tired making them enjoy the gentle motion of the carriage and the evening scenes along the country roads passing before their happy eyes like some wonderful strange panorama. Then the children went fast asleep, and Jemmy, riding beside the coachman, had hard work to keep awake. So they returned on board their respective ships thoroughly done up, and glad of the quiet shelter of their bunks.

Now I am not going to bore you with an account of how the work progressed on board the old barque, and how she grew to look almost young again under the busy hands of the workers; neither do I feel that it would interest you much to know how the crew, being able to get ashore every night, gave Captain Wilson a lot of trouble, until he discharged them, feeling sure that he would be able to get as many men as he wanted when the time came for him to sail. Of course, now that he was able to afford it, Mrs. Wilson and the children went to a very nice hotel, which lies a couple of miles out of the town, away from the heat and the dust and smells of the Canash, and there he spent many happy evening hours with them, enjoying the beautiful prospect, and so thankful for the wonderful change in his fortunes.

The *Sirius* sailed three days after her arrival for the Northern Islands on a tour, but before

leaving, each of the four owners bade Jemmy an affectionate farewell, besides each giving him a beautiful present as a keepsake. Captain Bunce also told him how sorry he was to lose him, for he had been a universal favourite from his bright, cheery, and respectful ways. Very curiously, too, it was freely said, that with Jemmy the luck of the ship would leave her, for they all having heard his history, came to the conclusion that he was born under a lucky star, and that his wonderful good fortune spread in some strange way to his shipmates. However, there could now be no question of keeping him, and so, as the *Sirius* got under weigh and cast off the wind, Jemmy slipped over the side into the waiting boat, and saw dimly through blinding tears the graceful form of the *Sirius* gliding away out of his life.

But, boy-like, he soon recovered and thought of the future, tried to think of himself as part owner of a big ship sailing the seas in the company of those he loved, and was immediately comforted. Being so advised by Captain Wilson and Mr. Burney, he spent most of his time on board the vessel watching the progress of the work, getting so interested that it was much better fun than playing, especially when everybody was ready to explain to him the how and the why of all that was being done, because, first, they knew he was part owner, and, secondly, because most men, unless

they are miserable brutes, like to answer a boy's intelligent questions about their work, and show him anything they can, which is the best way of being educated after all. Sometimes, though, he grew quite impatient to get to sea again. As he saw each piece of work being finished, he wanted to see how it would act; and although he listened eagerly to the conversations between Captain Wilson and Mr. Burney about the prospects of getting a good freight homeward from Mexico, and tried to master the many details of shipping business, he felt that it was very dull—that part of it, however important it might be.

However, after a month of hard work the *Julia Snow*, smartened up from truck to keel, shining with new paint and varnish inside and out, and with her poor old shabby cabin and state-rooms made so beautiful that she was hardly to be recognised for the same old ship, received on board again Mrs. Wilson and the children. It was a pleasant time for the captain and Jemmy, especially the latter, who, swelling with honest pride, showed the youngsters all over their ship, and prattled gaily to them of the good times they were going to have. But he noticed that both Eddie and Freda kept peeping shyly at him, and that they did not talk half so freely as they used to, which troubled him, until he asked them earnestly what was the matter. And then Freda said, "Mamma said we was to call you Mr. Baker now, because

you weren't a boy any longer, and half the ship belonged to you, and I liked you better as Jemmy." Poor Jemmy looked at the child for a moment in utter surprise, and then, without saying a word, rushed away to Mrs Wilson. Without any explanation he burst out, "Mrs. Wilson, do please tell Eddie and Freda that I ain't Mr. Baker; it frightens me. I'm only Jemmy. I'm afraid they won't play with me any more, and indeed I ain't a man yet, I'm only a boy. Of course I know you are all trying to make a man of me, and I'm very much obliged, but I'm so happy now, that I'm afraid I shan't like it at all when I have to be solemn and stuck-up like most men are—except Mr. Burney and Captain Wilson." Like a sensible woman as she was, she saw what a mistake she had been making, and said at once, "All right, Jemmy, you shall always be Jemmy to us, and I'll explain to the children if you like. Now run away and fetch them." Off flew Jemmy and fetched them, they wondering whatever was the matter. Then she said, "Darlings, I was wrong. This is your dear playmate Jemmy, not Mr. Baker, and you must be just the same with him as before. Try and forget what I told you about calling him mister, as it will make him very unhappy if you do." They looked first at him and then at their mother; then, with a joyful shriek they jumped at him, and the three had a regular romp again.

As soon as they had raced away she sought out her husband and Mr. Burney and told them what had happened, and all agreed that it would be a thousand pities to swell the boy up with ideas of his real importance—that would come soon enough. For the present, he had much better be left as a boy, and made to feel that he was still learning his profession, while the fact of his being part owner should be left unspoken about. Their conference was broken up by the coming of a little tug and the bustle of getting the ship unmoored. Slowly she moved down the narrow channel and out into the bay, anchoring almost in her old position to await the coming of the new crew that Captain Wilson had engaged to meet him at the shipping office at four o'clock that day. And when the tug had departed with the captain, Mr. Burney, Mrs. Wilson, and the youngsters gazed proudly around the ship, and thought hopefully of the future.

CHAPTER XX

It is very remiss of me I know, but I certainly ought to have mentioned that Captain Wilson had succeeded in securing a charter, or agreement to give him a cargo of mahogany from a port in Mexico called Tonalá, on a little river entering the Gulf. It was at a fairly good freight too, and he was in high spirits at the thought that at last the old barque was going to earn something after her long spell of not only idleness, but of spending money. He was also very well pleased at being able to secure a good crew of sailors, all anxious to get away and begin to earn money too. And as he did not want any trouble with them through drink, that curse of the sailor, he made a point of their all getting on board the same day. He was quite successful, and at four o'clock in the afternoon he returned, bringing them all with him, and all sober. At five the order was given to "man the windlass" (get the anchor up), and by the time it was dusk the *Julia Snow* was well clear of the island of Barbados on her way down the beautiful Caribbean Sea.

I wish I could make it clear to you how great was Captain Wilson's satisfaction at again having

everything ship-shape and good around him. Suppose you had been living in a house with hardly any furniture, hardly anything to use, and no money, not only to buy new things with, but to get everyday necessities, and then you were suddenly supplied with all you wanted in the way of things to use and money amply sufficient to buy your daily food besides, you would feel something of the joy that Captain Wilson did, but not quite so much. It was no wonder, then, that as the watches were set and the course made for Cape Maysi, at the entrance of the Gulf, Captain Wilson came to Mr. Burney as he sat in his deck chair and said, "Burney, I'm a happy man to-night, and I hope that I shall never forget that I owe it all to you and Jemmy. If anybody had told me a month ago that such a godsend was coming to me, I should have scoffed at it as an idle dream; but it *has* all come, and I hope with all my heart that I shall be sufficiently grateful." Burney replied sadly, "I'm afraid we're all in the same boat, captain, but I know that it's no use worrying about it. Let us hope that it will come to our turn to deserve gratitude from others. And now, captain, tell me what about this charter. In the first place, do you load entirely up at Tonala, or have you to go to another port? Where do you discharge the cargo, and what are you likely to make out of it?"

"I'm glad you asked me," said the captain,

“for I wanted to have a talk with you about it. We are to load entirely at Tonalá, half inside the bar and the other half in the roads. As to where we are to discharge, I do not know; we are to make Falmouth for orders; and as to freight, it is a pound a ton, which, as we carry eleven hundred tons, ought to net us at least £800 for the trip if we have any sort of luck. But I don't know whether you know what a terribly expensive place that coast is; a shipmaster seems to shed money at every pore, however careful he may be, so I can't hope to cut expenses very much. But we'll do our best, and I hope we shall have a profitable trip of it. By the way, what do you think, Burney, of our crowd, especially the two mates?” “I think very well of them,” replied Mr. Burney. “I believe they are a fine lot of fellows, and as for Mr. Salmon, the mate, and Mr. Thurston, the second, they both seem not only to know their work well, but to be on good terms with each other, and that, as you know so well, is a great thing. I feel certain that, as far as the crew goes, we are very well equipped.”

Just then Jemmy came along, and being called by the skipper, stopped before the pair. “Now, Jemmy,” said the skipper, “I'm going to put you in the mate's watch, and I shall ask him to let you have your full share in everything that's going on. I know from Mr. Burney that you are

very well up to your work, but now I want you to take a big interest in all that goes on to make up the work of the ship. You already know a smattering of navigation, but you haven't had much chance to put it to practical use so far. Now you shall do all that I do in navigating the ship as far as is possible, and I'll try and make it so interesting to you that you'll enjoy every bit of it. I have bought a sextant for you, and you shall act just as if you were a navigating officer. From what I can see of you, you'll take to it like a bird to flying, and I'm sure you'll feel glad to be able to handle your own ship. I understand from Mr. Burney that you don't know how old you are, but from what he has told me I should say you were about fourteen or fifteen, and that is not a bit too young to learn all that a sailor wants to know. Will you like all this, do you think?"

Of course Jemmy said he would, although he was no fonder of lessons than most boys are. But he could see how different school lessons would be to this kind of teaching, where the use of everything he learned was proved to him at once in the most practical way. It is only fair to say that now he learned twice as fast as he had ever done before, because he was allowed to use everything that he learned at once, and he could see for himself what a fine science navigation was. His larks with the children were not cut short though;

a certain part of every day was devoted to them, but they were not allowed to interfere with him while he was at work. Mrs. Wilson took good care of that. Such was the speed with which he gained knowledge of the ways of ship handling, that by the time they arrived off the coast of Mexico the mate reported to the skipper that Jemmy was quite competent to take the watch himself, if he only had confidence. He had the ability, but of course felt how young he was, and didn't like to give the necessary orders to the men, although they would certainly have obeyed him.

Side by side with his knowledge of seamanship had gone his acquaintance with the rules of navigation, owing to the careful way in which he had been taught, not being allowed to let a problem slide if it was wrong, but made to labour over it till he found where the mistake was. And you may imagine his joy when he worked up the ship's position from his own sights of the sun and found that he was right by the sight of the land agreeing with the chart. He was delighted beyond measure. They had a fine-weather run for fourteen days to Tonala bar from Barbados, a run without any accident worth mentioning, no gales, no hair's-breadth escapes from danger, and they made the bar of Tonala River at day-break in the morning, just at the top of high-water, so that they did not have to anchor, but

sailed right in. They had flung most of their ballast overboard, the weather being very fine and the ship "stiff," as we call it, meaning that she stood up well without ballast, so that there was no delay. A pilot was waiting, and took them right in over the bar, where they anchored in perfect shelter, and immediately prepared to receive their bulky cargo.

It was a wild spot, peopled only by a few men of a dozen nationalities, who lived in queer shanties along the river bank, and were all engaged in the business of shipping mahogany. The river swarmed with fish and alligators, so that there was plenty of sport of a kind had they chosen to go in for it. But to their great delight they had arrived at a good time, when there were only two small schooners there besides themselves, and the timber was coming down the river from the forests of the interior in large quantities. It was in logs, some weighing six or eight tons, great square masses of timber hewn from mighty forest trees up-country with enormous labour by the woodmen, dragged down to the water by bullocks, and strung on to a long rope, by means of which they were brought alongside. Jemmy now had an opportunity of seeing how gear could be rigged up to lift such enormous weights on board, and how cleverly those huge logs, when they had been lowered into the hold, were stowed in their places by the stevedores, or cargo stowers, from the

shore—Greeks, Spaniards, Mexicans, and Italians, all paid very high wages, but all employed because otherwise the ship would not have been allowed to load at all. Captain Wilson said with a sigh that it was a shame, he could have loaded the ship very well with his own crew, but he was not allowed to, and consequently a goodly slice was cut off the ship's earnings.

However, it could not be helped, and anyhow, they were most fortunate in getting the cargo as fast as they wanted it, which is not very often the case. So well were they served in this respect that in a fortnight after their arrival they had taken in as many logs as they could inside the bar, and were delighted to shift the vessel out into the roads away from the clouds of mosquitoes and sand-flies that made life a burden to them, especially the poor children, who were covered with bites until they looked as if they had had an attack of measles. Once out in the roads, although the vessel rolled and tumbled about almost as if she were at sea, they were rid of the worst of these insect pests, and the other troubles that awaited them did not seem to matter so much.

But it was no joke, I can tell you, getting those big logs on board out there with the ship rolling so much. It seemed sometimes as if the ship's side must be smashed in, and when on reaching the rail the log swung in-board, it looked as if

some terrible accident must happen with such a great mass of timber flying backwards and forwards across the deck before they could get it lowered into the hold. By great good fortune, however, no accident did happen, and the crew worked contentedly, being well fed and cared for. They were a fine lot of fellows, whom it was a pleasure to command, and they gave not the slightest trouble.

It really did seem as if Jemmy had brought them luck, for that coast has a most evil reputation among shipmasters. It is so unprotected, so liable to sudden storms, there are so many delays of various kinds, that it is all strewn with wrecks, and it really is considered, or was in my time, the last place to send a ship to unless you badly wanted to lose her. But except for the difficulty in handling the cargo outside the bar, the *Julia Snow* had no trouble at all, either with handling crew or stevedores, and in the short space of a month from the time she arrived on the coast she had taken on board as much mahogany and cedar as she could carry, and was ready to sail for home. She finished her cargo at ten in the morning, and the captain, calling all hands aft, said, "Now, boys, you have all worked so well, that I think it would be a thousand pities to let your work be lost for the sake of a little extra exertion. So, if you'll go below now and have a rest until after dinner, and then turn to

and get under weigh, we'll be well off this wretched coast by nightfall, and run so much less risk of losing all the fruits of our labour in a gale, if one of those beastly 'northers' that this coast is infamous for should spring up." All hands responded with a hearty "All right, sir," and departed to get the rest spoken of by the captain.

All the afterguard, that is, all the men belonging aft with the exception of the cook and steward, now gathered on the poop, which was really a fine promenade deck, and lounging at their full ease, discussed the passage home. Jemmy nestled between Freda and Eddie, who indeed always clung to him whenever they could get the chance, but he paid great attention to what was talked about, for he was just beginning to feel the full effect of the lessons he had been learning. And as he knew the subject very well about which they were talking, it was full of interest for him, more especially as, although he did not attempt to interpose with any remarks, he was made to feel that he was fully one of the party, and was not in any sense being talked down to. They spoke of the direct route through the Florida channel and the many reefs to be avoided off the Campeché coast, of the tremendous current of the Gulf Stream sweeping through the great curve between Cuba and the Bahama banks on the one hand, and the horn of Florida on the other, where the great ocean river compressed

into those narrow limits increases its speed to sometimes a hundred and ten miles a day, as it frets to get out to the wide Atlantic to commence its four thousand mile journey of benevolence. They spoke also of the chances of a fine-weather passage, which of course they earnestly desired, although some foolish people ashore have an idea (where they get it from, I don't know) that sailors rather prefer storms. However, as it was just at the end of summer, there was little prospect of any serious gale.

So that, altogether, it was a very pleasant meeting for all except the two children, who could not imagine whatever all the old fogies were prosing about, and wanted to get Jemmy away for a rag. They felt they had a grievance against him, for he was certainly not so much inclined for a lark as he used to be; he was getting more manly, more absorbed in his work; in fact, he was already passing over the line that divides boy from man.

The call came to dinner, and they all trooped down below to a good meal, very different, as the children often remarked to each other, to what it used to be before they met with Mr. Burney and Jemmy again, although they did not as yet know why. But with their healthy appetites all in full working order feeding-time did not take long, and as soon as the almost indispensable after-dinner smoke had been indulged in, the order was given to "man the windlass," Jemmy, as

a special favour, being allowed to go aloft and loose the sails instead of having the beastly old job of hauling back the cable. Lustily sang the men at the windlass, "Hurrah, my boys, we're ho-omeward bound," the old familiar sea-song that has thrilled so many thousands of hearts, and now thrilled Jemmy's, although as yet he did not know what home meant.

Swiftly rose the anchor, it was catted and fished (how can I tell what all that means without worrying you?), one by one the big sails were stretched into their places, and away went the good old barque for England. For England: it gave everybody on board a warm feeling around the waist as they thought of it, and yet, strange to say, there was not one person on board who had a home in England. In fact there was not one person on board who had a home anywhere except what all must feel to be the very temporary home of the ship. It is a great want, and I hope that none of my readers will ever feel it, but it is one that is peculiarly felt by the sailor. But then these friends of ours had each other, and they looked forward to such pleasure as our own dear land affords in each other's society. Besides, the cargo had been shipped in very rapid time for that place, and the expenses had been so carefully kept down, that it looked like being a very profitable passage, and Captain Wilson's hopes were high that his fortunes were on the mend.

The wind held fair from the westward and fairly strong, allowing them to steer their course as steadily along the dangerous Campeché coast as if she had been a steamer, but the brightest and most careful look-out was kept for hidden dangers, since the currents just there are very treacherous. And so it came about that on the fourth night of leaving Tonala the look-out man reported a pillar of flame, rising apparently from the sea, just about where the reckoning placed a little group of sandy islets on a great coral reef. The captain was immediately called, and decided to heave-to for daylight, believing that such a signal could only be made by a shipwrecked crew. An anxious time followed, for it needed great care to keep the vessel waiting in safety where so many conflicting currents abounded, but, long as it seemed, the blessed daylight came at last, and showed them the white foam-topped ridges of the breakers on the reef near at hand, and in the midst of them the battered hull of a ship. And on a little white patch of sand close to the vessel they saw a group of men standing by a flagstaff, upon which something was hoisted, which looked like a shirt. They ran in as near as they dared, and then hove-to again, and lowered a boat, with the chief officer in charge, who had orders not to run any risk of getting the boat stove in the breakers, but to seek out any easy landing-place.

Be sure he was very anxiously watched as he departed, but he found no difficulty in reaching the islet or cay, as these patches of sand are called down there, for on that side the islet was at the very edge of the reef, and had, besides, a snug little bay, into which a boat could easily enter. With the glasses they watched the boat from the ship until she grounded on the beach, saw the waiting group rush towards her, saw them all climb into her, and the boat push off again, without more than ten minutes' delay, with the rescued men. In a quarter of an hour she was back alongside, her passengers climbed on board, and she was hoisted in her place; the yards were trimmed again to the fair wind blowing, and her passage home was resumed, the whole pleasant task of rescue, apart from the time of waiting at night, not having taken one hour.

Then came the explanation. The saved were the crew of the Norwegian barque *Kjerulf*, which had driven ashore there in a gale a week previous. The men had barely escaped with their lives, and had been living on the cay on a very scanty diet of shell-fish and sea-soaked biscuit which had washed ashore, owing their fire even to a habit one of the sailors had of always carrying his matches in a water-tight tin box in an inside pocket. As usual they could all speak fairly good English, so there was no difficulty in finding

out all about them. And it was decided, as the barque had ample provisions on board, to take them right across the Atlantic to England, instead of spoiling the trip by putting into any Cuban port, or even Nassau or Key West. So they were divided into the watches, while the captain and mates were offered the hospitality of the cabin, and bidden consider themselves as free as any passenger could be.

The wind held steady, and the old barque made splendid progress, having now a double crew, with every man a willing worker. Moreover, the utmost good feeling prevailed on board both fore and aft, and the rescued crew were loud in their praises of their British hosts. As usual Jemmy was about the happiest of the whole crowd, feeling, as he did, that here was another signal proof of his luck in being able to repay in some measure the kindness he had experienced. Besides, he was now beginning to feel the pride of the owner of a fine ship, watching her performance under the best possible conditions. For the *Julia Snow* really was a fine ship, although she was built of soft wood, and could not in the nature of things last a quarter as long as a ship built of steel. But she was now in such good condition that she looked like new, and as all hands wanted employment, she was kept very smart, looking indeed the picture of what a ship should be.

So they sped on, in glorious circumstances of wind and weather, until they entered the Florida channel, where the wind faltered, failed, and came round ahead. But it did not blow hard, and so Jemmy was treated to a new exhibition of seamanship, the tacking of a vessel against the wind through a narrow channel with the tide under her lee pushing her along broadside on, as it were. They saw afar off the powerful lights of the Florida coast, but none of those on the dangerous Bahama banks. They did not hug danger near enough for that. And on the thirteenth day after leaving Tonalá they emerged into the broad Atlantic, the worst part of their journey over, and a clear run of nearly four thousand miles before them to England.

It is now time to say what I have been feeling for a long time, but I have purposely kept back, because I don't like boys to begin thinking of that sort of thing too early, and that is, that Jemmy having begun to find himself man fashion as regards his work and his place in the world, also felt stirring within him some other feelings of an almost painfully pleasant nature. Freda, the thirteen-year-old daughter of his friends and partners, was a lovely child, without any of the forward airs and graces that so many girls have who have been brought up ashore. And the very fact of her being a girl made her quite the equal of Jemmy, who was full two years older, in the

quickness of her intelligence. Gradually they became distant to each other, much to the bewilderment of Eddie, who of course thought, as any other youngster of his age would, that they'd had a jolly row, and in the innocence of his heart clumsily tried to make peace between them. Of course he got well snubbed by both, and while he wasn't told exactly to mind his own business, he was made to understand that it was no affair of his, and he would do well to let things alone. He was so upset about it that he went to his mother, bless him, and asked her what was up. She, of course, had seen what was going on, and didn't want it interfered with at all, so she mystified poor Eddie further still, her attempts to satisfy him without letting him know what was going on giving him a fit of the sulks that lasted nearly all day.

But very soon there came something that chased away all these ideas of the young minds. The wind, soon after they left the land, got out into the westward again, and steadily increased in force until the sturdy barque had as much as she could do to carry all sail. Not but what she was staunch enough aloft, but the worst of these soft-wood ships is that they will strain so much under the pressure of the wind, and if you try them too much, there is the danger of a butt starting, or the end of a plank coming undone. With a steel ship you can carry on as

long as your masts will stand the strain, or your crew be able to handle the sails when the time comes to take it in, but other considerations must be thought of in a wooden vessel. So as the wind increased and the great Western ocean waves began to roll up, reminding Jemmy of the Southern Seas, it became necessary to shorten sail, reluctantly of course, but still it had to be done. And Jemmy, knowing more, saw with quite as much concern as his partner how difficult it was to decide how long they might keep her running before it with safety. And they had to bear the annoyance too of seeing two or three great steel vessels come rushing past them under all sail, their hulls almost hidden in the flying foam.

It grew at last so bad that for twenty-four hours the captain never left the deck, feeling it his duty to watch her every minute, since he must decide when or whether it would be unsafe to run any longer, and how much more risk it would be to heave her to. Then after a heavy squall, during which everything was hidden in a smother of spray, and men set their teeth and held on hoping for a lull, the wind eased off a trifle, and although it did not change the steadiness of its direction it gradually fined down, until they were able to carry all sail again and see the decks clear of water occasionally. Also the sky cleared overhead and the sun peeped out, growing stronger and

stronger, until the weather was all that a sailor desires, a bright sky above, a fairly smooth sea, and a strong fair wind for home. So it remained, and they raced past the Azores, those outposts of home always so welcome to the homeward bound deep-water sailor. But they were clothed in mist, so Jemmy and the children saw very little of them.

On the twenty-ninth day after leaving Tonala, Jemmy, coming on deck at daylight, saw that the deep blue of the ocean had changed to a dingy green, for at last they had reached soundings, the edge of the great bank upon which the British Islands stand. There was no need to stop to take soundings, for their reckoning was quite good, having been taken by the sun, and by four o'clock that afternoon the lovely coast of Cornwall, with its delicious tints of green shining almost dazzling under the rays of the declining sun, came into view. Now Jemmy had no one to come home to, all his loved ones were around him, and yet he felt choky, felt his eyes grow dim, and felt a strong desire to blow his nose as he looked again upon England, after an absence of nearly two years. For the time the curious little stiffness which had arisen between him and Freda was broken down, to the wondering delight of Eddie, and they all clustered together on the poop watching the opening out of every fresh point, Jemmy airing his new knowledge of the coast gained from the chart with

much pride. Then came the pilot with his jolly air of welcome, looked upon by the youngsters almost like a visitor from another world; came the funny tailor men who make such perilous journeys out to sea to meet ships bound into Falmouth for orders in the hope that they may be able to sell the sailors some new clothes—jolly good clothes they are too, and much cheaper than the sailor is likely to get them in the part of London he usually lives in, so that I have always in three visits given what custom I have had to the adventurous Falmouth tailors.

No, we don't want a tug with this beautiful fair wind, thank you. Round Pendennis Point we glide, past the Black Rock, and presently, with a rattle that gladdens every heart, the anchor goes down in English waters, the *Julia Snow* has arrived safely home. Of course the captain had to go ashore at once to see about his orders and to take with him the rescued crew, but Jemmy and Mr. Burney were quite content to wait and admire the beautiful scenery under the lovely colours of the setting sun. They made a happy group, Mrs. Wilson and the children, Jemmy and Mr. Burney, sitting talking about England and the joyful time they would have. But Jemmy's wistful glances at Freda were almost more than Mrs. Wilson could bear, so she took an early opportunity of getting the boy by himself and talking to him. She told him how glad

she was that he loved Freda, and assured him that Freda loved him, but warned him how young they both were, and begged him to remember that. She pointed out to him how good a chance he had to get on with his work, and how thankful she was that they should not be separated, and then assured him of her love for him, and her desire to see him happy. "And now," she wound up, "go on being a boy, as manly a boy as you like, but still a boy. You'll be a man, with all a man's responsibilities and sorrows, quite soon enough, and whatever you do, don't have any sweethearting just yet. Plenty of time for that. Besides, think of poor Eddie; you've been freezing him out lately. Get along with you." And Jemmy, giving her a hug and a kiss, bounded away, and was soon having a jolly rag with his two little chums, for they all needed to let off steam, they were so full of excitement.

In the midst of their frolic Captain Wilson came aboard and brought the joyful news that they were ordered to London, at which there was general rejoicing fore and aft. But he did not care to get under weigh that night, preferring to let all hands have one quiet night, as it was now getting late. So everybody turned in early, and at daylight, or about four o'clock next morning, the cry was made, "Man the windlass," and all hands turned to with a will, getting the ship away so rapidly, that by breakfast she was

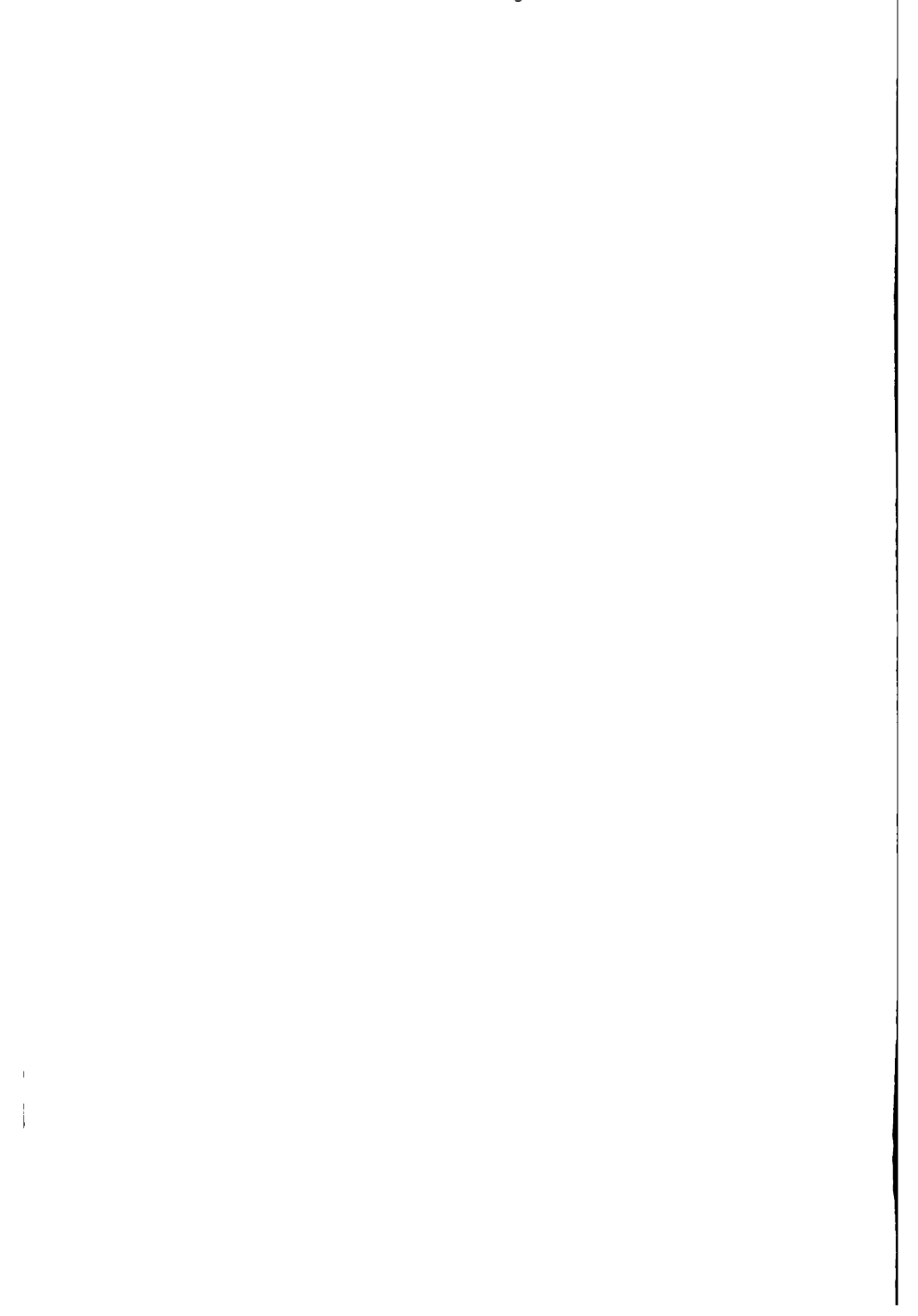
off the Eddystone. There was a glorious fair wind and a perfect summer's day, the two combining, with their being homeward bound, to make the most delightful time I know of.

Never a flaw in the wind or an alteration in the course all that day and night, and morning again saw them off Beachy Head, with a tug-boat hovering around hungrily for a job. But they wanted no tug yet, they had so splendid a breeze, and so on they went up to the pilot ground off Dungeness. Just a short halt there to receive the pilot, and then away again round the Forelands, past the dreaded Goodwin Sands, looking so innocent under the afternoon sun, until off Margate the captain made a bargain with a tug to tow him up and dock him for twenty pounds. This news was joyfully received by all hands, and they made the big tow-rope fairly fly up on deck, passed it, and made it fast. Away went the tug with her charge, and down came the sails like autumn leaves falling from the trees. Jemmy was so busy that he had not time to note the wonders of the great river, and indeed was quite surprised when night fell and found them still towing. But they saved the tide, and before midnight were snugly moored in the West India Docks, so sheltered and shut in that it seemed almost a miracle how they got there.

And now, dear boys, we must bid Jemmy farewell, having seen him safely through all his

adventures back again to the land of his birth. I will only say that now he commands a big ship, and little Freda is his wife, and, of course, the ship belongs to him. He carries his faithful friend Mr. Burney with him still. Captain Wilson, his father-in-law, also commands another fine ship belonging to the firm of Baker and Wilson, for everything has prospered with them, and they only go to sea because they do not like to give it up. And I earnestly hope that you have enjoyed following so far the adventures of this fortunate young Son of the Sea.

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